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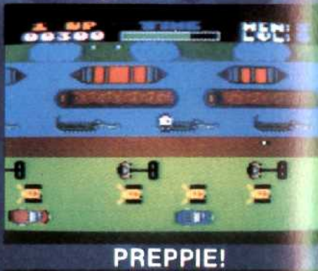

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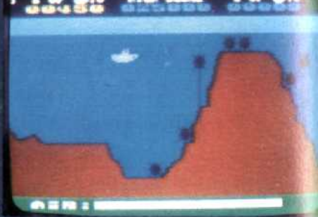

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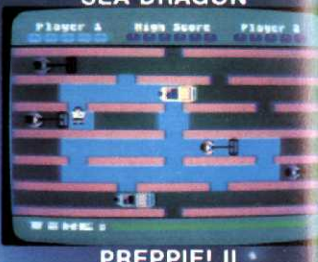

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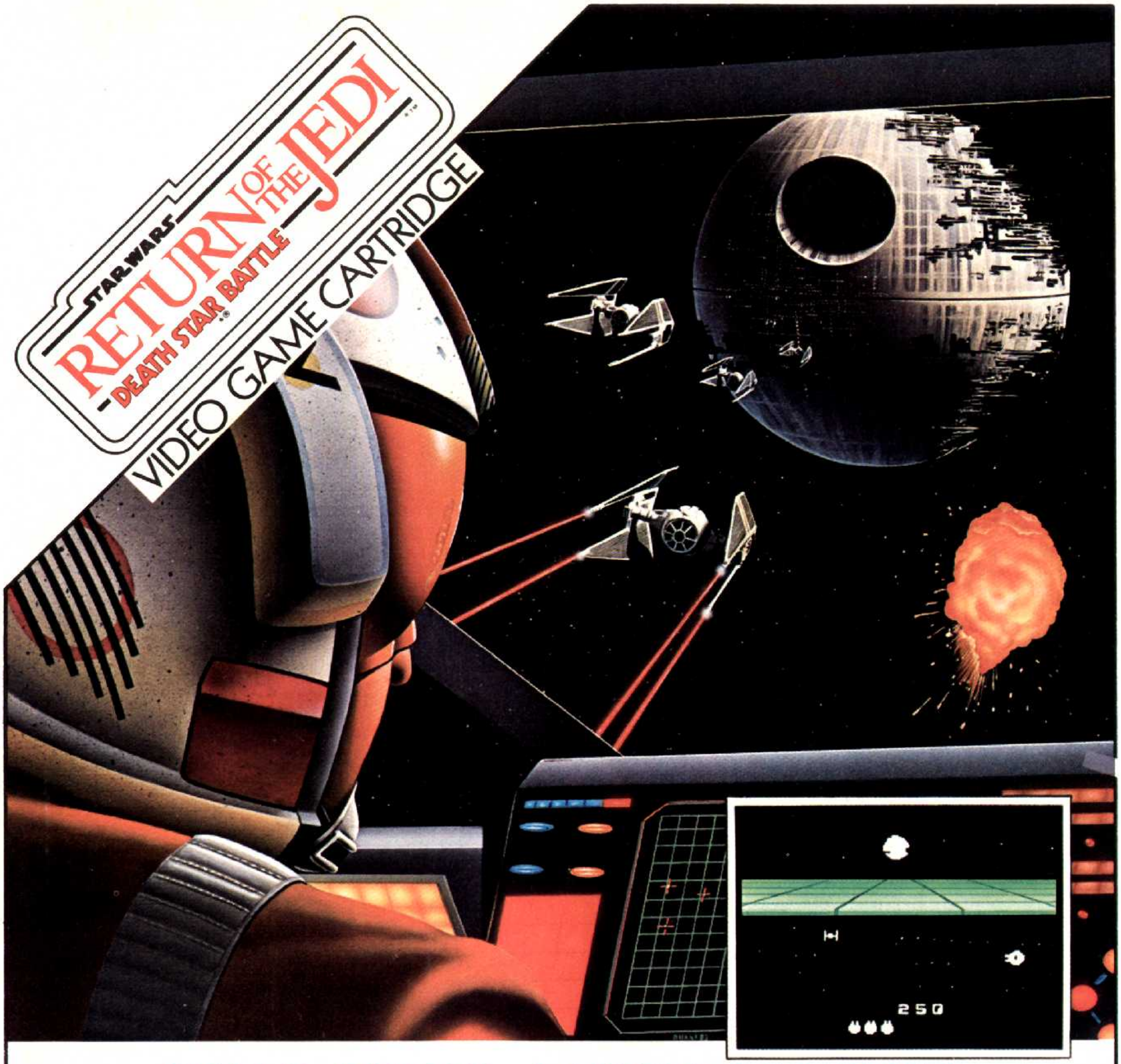
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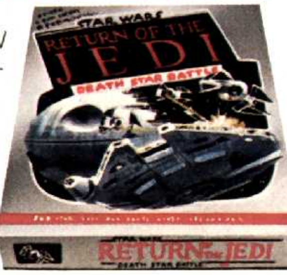
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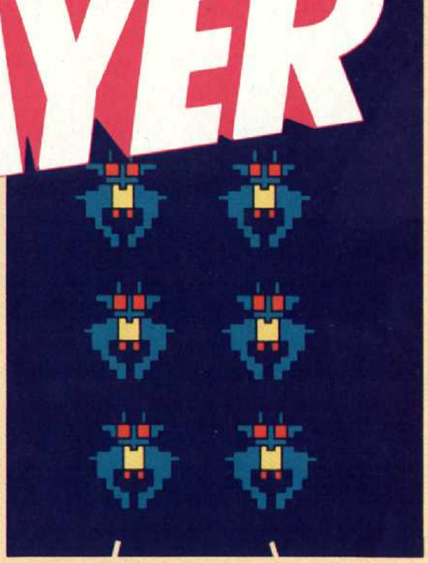

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PLUG IT IN

I'm considering buying either an Atari VCS, an Atari 5200, a ColecoVision or an Intellivision II. But all this talk about things you plug into this and things you plug into that is driving me crazy. Now I have no idea *what* to buy. Can you clear it all up?

Randolph Trotta

Okay, here's the scoop. Right now there are adapters that allow you to play Atari VCS cartridges on ColecoVision, Intellivision II and the Atari 5200. You can also plug a Starpath Supercharger (it expands the memory) into any of these adapters. There are no adapters (yet) to plug ColecoVision carts, Intellivision carts or Atari 5200 carts into any other machines than the ones they were made for. All four systems can or shortly will be expandable into computers if you purchase their keyboard add-ons. ColecoVision also has a "Super Game" module to increase the memory of that system, and if you really *want to be driven crazy, try the Turbo expansion module for ColecoVision. All accessories are purchased separately from the systems.*

OUT OF BUSINESS

I understand that Data Age, U.S. Games and Apollo have all stopped making video games. Why? Are any of their games still for sale? Will they become collector's items?

Robert Hanover

A few years ago, when it was just Atari and Mattel, we would buy every game that came out. Now, with so many companies making video games, we have to be more choosy. To succeed with such competition, a company has to not only have great games, but also have great distribution, advertising and promotion. This is an example of "survival of the fittest." Apollo went under nearly a year ago, and we still see some of their games in the stores, usually at a good discount. Most likely, games from companies that went out of business will someday be worth far more than 20 or 30 dollars.

INTELLIVISION III?

Thank you for your balanced evaluation of the Atari 5200 versus ColecoVision. But I have heard that Intellivision III will be here by the end of the year. Should I wait and buy that instead of Atari or Coleco's "super system"?

Heather Harbison

Mattel has been dropping hints about Intellivision III (See "Mattel Strikes Back" in this issue), but until we get a unit in our hands we can't tell you if it is an improvement on Atari or Coleco. You can bet we'll let you know as soon as we can.

MOVIE/GAMES

Why do you and all the other magazines run articles on the "movie/video games"? With the exception of *The Empire Strikes Back*, every video game based on a movie has been incredibly terrible!

Rex Wallace

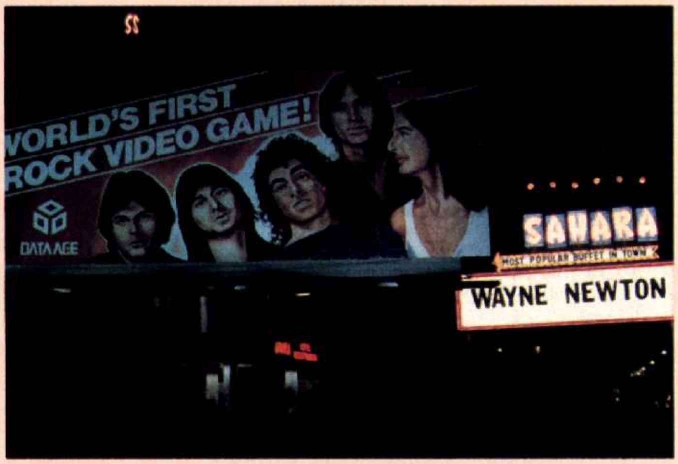
You're right. We admit it. We won't do it again. Promise. But first, we want to see how Porky's—The Game *turns out.*

MORE REVIEWS

Your Fall 1982 Home Video Game Buyer's Guide is just what the doctor ordered. With so many systems and cartridges on the market, it is absolutely necessary for the player to be as informed as he or she can be. I would like to see you keep this rating system in every issue and expand it to include Parker Brothers, U.S. Games, Spectravision and all the other companies. Keep up the good work.

Tom Robbins

Here's what we're planning. While all the other video game magazines review 10-15 games per issue, we plan to review 30-40. We do this by evaluating just a few games in depth and giving brief reviews of all the others. We think it's more important to tell you about all the games that are out there than it is to devote a lot of space to a select few games.



Maybe Data Age should have made a Wayne Newton Escape game.

SUGGESTION BOX

I have a suggestion for the video games companies—make your cartridge boxes smaller. A cartridge the size of a pack of cigarettes does not need a box the size of a paperback book. It's a waste of paper, it takes up too much space on store shelves, and I'll bet that *I'm* paying more money for it.

Julius Riccio

Good idea. Floppy disk computer games packed in big boxes are even more ridiculous.

OUT OF MY HEAD

In order for you to print a game I made up, do I have to send a computer printout or something like that? I don't know anything about programming, I just like to make games up out of my head.

Justin Hoy

No programming skills are necessary. Just send us a drawing of your game, a photo of yourself, and a description of the game.

FEW DEMANDS

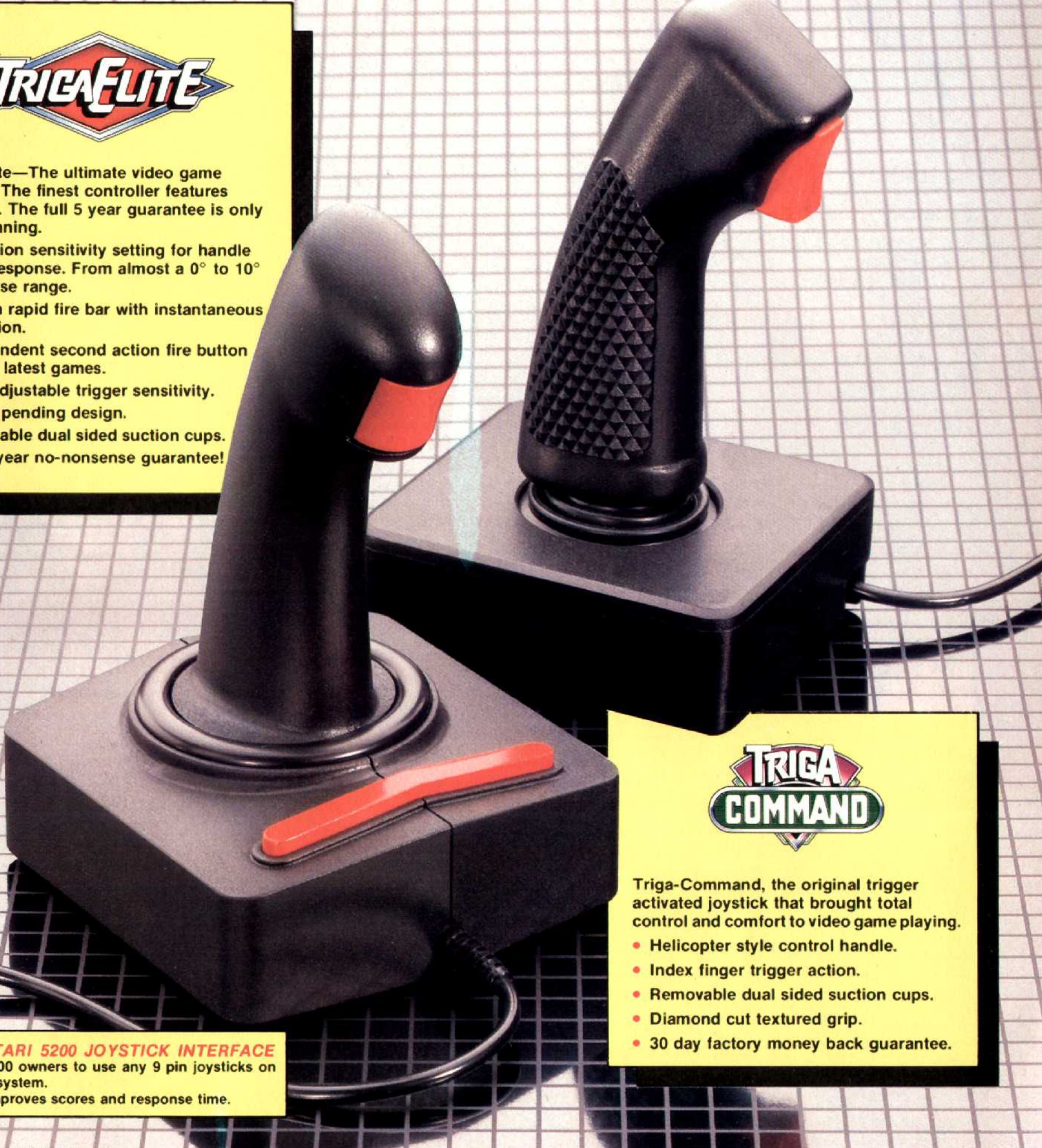
Do you know what the best part of your magazine is? "What's In Store For You." That's all I want—a list of all the companies and what products are coming out for what systems. Thanks.

Marvin Tabak

P.S. The nerd poster was good too.

Got a question? Got a gripe? Just want a half a million people to see your name in print? Punch your initials in here, pal, and write: Letters to the Editor, Video Games Player, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

Thumb Action Is Done... The Trigger Era Has Begun!



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FIRST NEWS WAVE

HOT GOSSIP

What do **Roger Moore, Bruce Jenner, George Plimpton, Alan Alda,** and **Santa Claus** have in common? They all rep vidgame companies—**Spectravideo, Activision, Mattel, Atari,** and **Starpath** respectively. Reportedly, **Fox** asked **Alda** to rep their **MASH** game, but he insisted it be nonviolent. So Fox signed **Jamie Farr** and Alda pockets a rumored **10 million** for five years. Wait till nonviolent Alan gets a load of **Battlezone**... **Wico's new slogan**—*"My Sticko Won't Go Wacko Because It's A Wico."* Give us a break!... Since **Data Age** went under, what happens to their **Mr. Bill** game? **Universal** has purchased the rights and will be making it into an arcade game... **Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr.** and **Mario Bros.** were all designed by the same guy at **Nintendo** and they're rumored to be making the latter into a home game by **themselves**... The long awaited **Odyssey Three** has been scrapped. But they will come out with some new system next year ... **Parker** has licensed **Gyrus** for a home game... Remember that great **Coleco Super Game** module that was to play **100** screens of **Donkey Kong**? It seems to have disappeared in the excitement over their **Adam Computer**... **Atari** is to replace the **5200 joystick** with a conventional self-centering one... **Fox** supposedly commissioned three different companies to design them a **MASH** game, then they picked the one they liked best... Three of **Sega's** game designers have left to go to **Atari**, which is being sued by **Mattel** for stealing three of *their* designers in order to get games for **Intellivision** out by Christmas... What will Coleco's **Tarzan** do that **Jungle Hunt** and **Pitfall** haven't already done?... Why did **Roger Moore** sign with **Spectravideo** if **Parker** has the **James Bond** game?... Incidentally, now it will be **Plimpton** versus **Alda** on TV commercials and Alda *played* Plimpton in the movie **Paper Lion**!... **Starpath's Steve "Commie Mutants" Landrum** has designed a terrific new version of **Frogger** for the Supercharger... The **Unitronics Expander** won't turn your VCS into a computer after all—they scrapped it in favor of their new **Sonic** computer... **Pioneer** has found a way to link computers and **laserdiscs**... **Starpath's Rabbit Transit** was originally called **Hopalong Catastrophe**... **First Star Software** has made a deal with **Marvel** to make games based on Marvel characters. First Star has also sold their successful **Astro Chase** Atari 400 game to **Parker,** who will be coming out with a VCS version... There is no truth to the rumor that **Lech Walesa** will be the spokesman for **Atari's Pole Position** home game... Hot rumor of the month —**Activision** will buy **Sirius Software**... **David "Pitfall" Crane** taught his protoge **Steve Cartright** how to program the Atari VCS in two days. Cartright says all those weird objects in **Megamania** were named *after* the game was programmed. He also says his wife hated the early forms of **Plaque Attack**, so he improved it... Prolific **David Lubar** designed **Nexar** (Spectravision), **Cineman** (Sirius), **Worm War I, Fantastic Voyage, Flash Gordon** and **Spacemaster X7** (Fox)... Soon you will be able to buy **"The Unroller Controller,"** the first trackball that doesn't roll. This is not a joke!... **Dragon's Lair** will be remembered as the game that changed the history of video games... **Zimag** pulled out of the game business even before their first game was released... Remember the arcade classics **Gun Fight, Seawolf II, Spectar,** and **Fire One**? **Epyx** will be coming out with computer game versions. They also have a new driving game, **Pitstop**, in which you have to pull off the road and change your tires... In the final days of **Apollo**, their creditors were watching the company with surveillance equipment so that none of the employees would steal anything... **The Pink Panther** is coming from **Odyssey**, not **Parker** as we reported in the last issue... and that "Scramble-type" game for the **Commodore 64**—it's called **Ozie Ozone**... Rock star **Todd Rundgren** is negotiating with **CBS** to produce a series of "entertainment software programs." Todd penned **Paintbox,** one of the earliest Apple graphics programs... **K-Tel** to come out with VCS carts with one game on each side... That's it, guys. Use it or lose it.

After the success of Pitfall and Jungle Hunt, can Coleco top it with Tarzan? (top) Above, Dragon's Lair. It's worth 50 cents.

NEW PRODUCTS

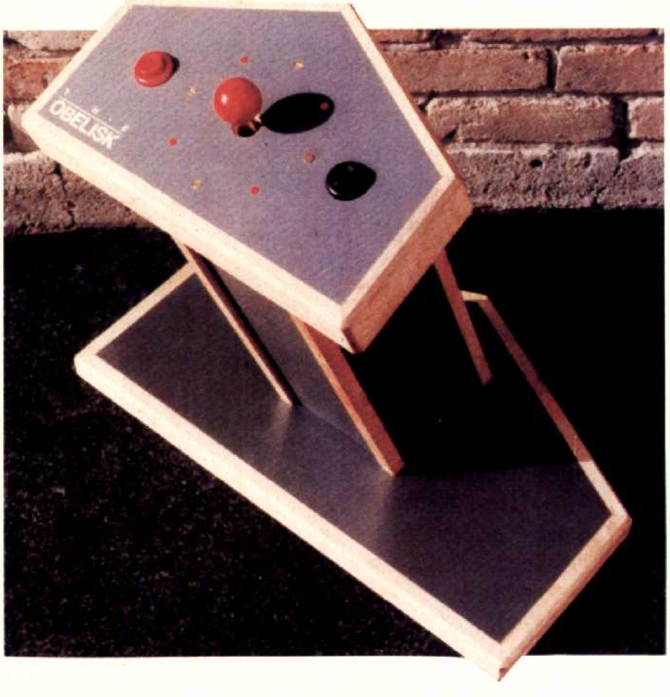
BLASTER!
AUTO-FIRE MODULE

RAPID FIRE MODULE

How'd you like to punch off 20 shots a second? The adjustable speed "Blaster" will help you annihilate aliens with a continuous beam of devastation. It plugs in between the game console and the joystick and will not harm your Atari VCS, 400/800, ColecoVision or VIC-20. The Blaster is particularly useful when you're playing against someone who is better than you. Just find a way to hide the wires. $12.95 from *Questar, 670 N.W. Pennsylvania Ave., Chehalis, WA 98532.*

CONTROLLER BASE

An obelisk is "a four sided stone pillar." Webster's doesn't say anything about playing **Grunds In Space** on one. But The Obelisk, made of hardwood and formica, has a built-in, eight-position Wico joystick so you can play all your favorite games in your comfy chair. A 12 foot extension cable is included and rapid fire button is optional. The Obelisk costs $89.95 and will interface with Atari VCS, ColecoVision, 400/800/1200, and Commodore computers. A two-player version is available. *J.D. Home Associates, 618 West Griffin Dr., Bozeman, MT 59715.*



COMPUTER TOUCH TABLET

As "friendly" as computers are these days, they still have these keyboards that you've got to type on. What a drag. The Koalapad Touch Tablet lets you draw directly on the screen, bypassing the keyboard. This handheld peripheral is connected to your Apple, Atari, Commodore or IBM computer by a cable and can be used for playing games, drawing pictures and for business applications. The Koalapad and Micro Illustrator Island Graphics software package runs for less than $125. *Koala Technologies, 4962 El Camino Real, Ste. 125, Los Altos, CA 94022.*

GAMELINE
MASTER MODULE
CVC

TELEDELIVERY OF GAMES

Stamp out cartridges! Now you can hook your Atari-compatible game system up to your telephone and let Ma Bell send the games over. After you buy CVC's "Master Module" for $50, you can choose from dozens of games they have licensed and pay only for the time you play. For the average player, it will cost $1 to play about an hour and this charge will be added to your credit card bill. The Master Module can load an 8K game in 40 seconds. Game previews and contests will also be offered, as well as a sportsline, stockline, and mailline. "Teledelivery" may just revolutionize video games. *Control Video Corporation, 8620 Westwood Center Drive, Vienna, VA 22180.*

VIDEOMAX
VIDEO GAME GLOVE

VIDEO GAME GLOVE

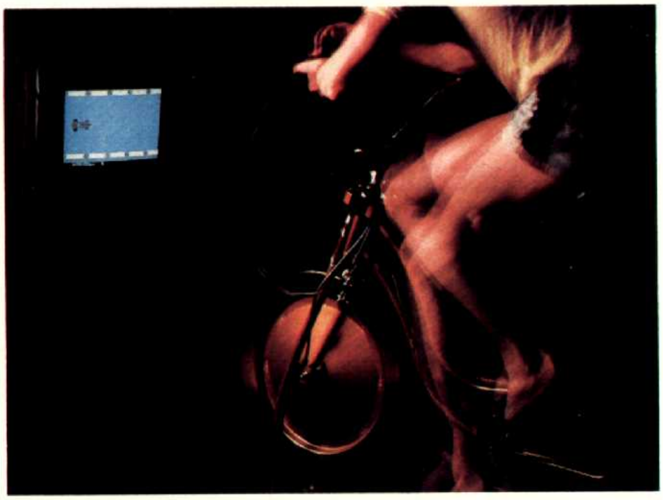
Do you sweat a lot? Well, in addition to a good antiperspirant, you might try putting on a video game glove. Nancy and Company's "Videomax" glove not only keeps your hand from slipping on the joystick, it also gives your opponent the finger. It comes in white, navy, small, medium, large and even left or right. Send $8.40 to: *Nancy and Company, 22594 Mission Blvd., Suite 302, Hayward, CA 94541.*

VIDEO GAME-READY TV

The worst part of video gaming is having to mess around behind the TV set to plug the game in. Now Sony has a new 13-inch TV, their model KV-1331, that has a jack right up front for a video game, computer or video cassette recorder. The set also has fewer components than most sets, resulting in higher reliability and lower cost—$399.95. Sliding volume control, pushbutton tuning and Auto Color included. *Sony, Sony Drive, Park Ridge, NJ 07656.*

EXTRA-SMALL JOYSTICK

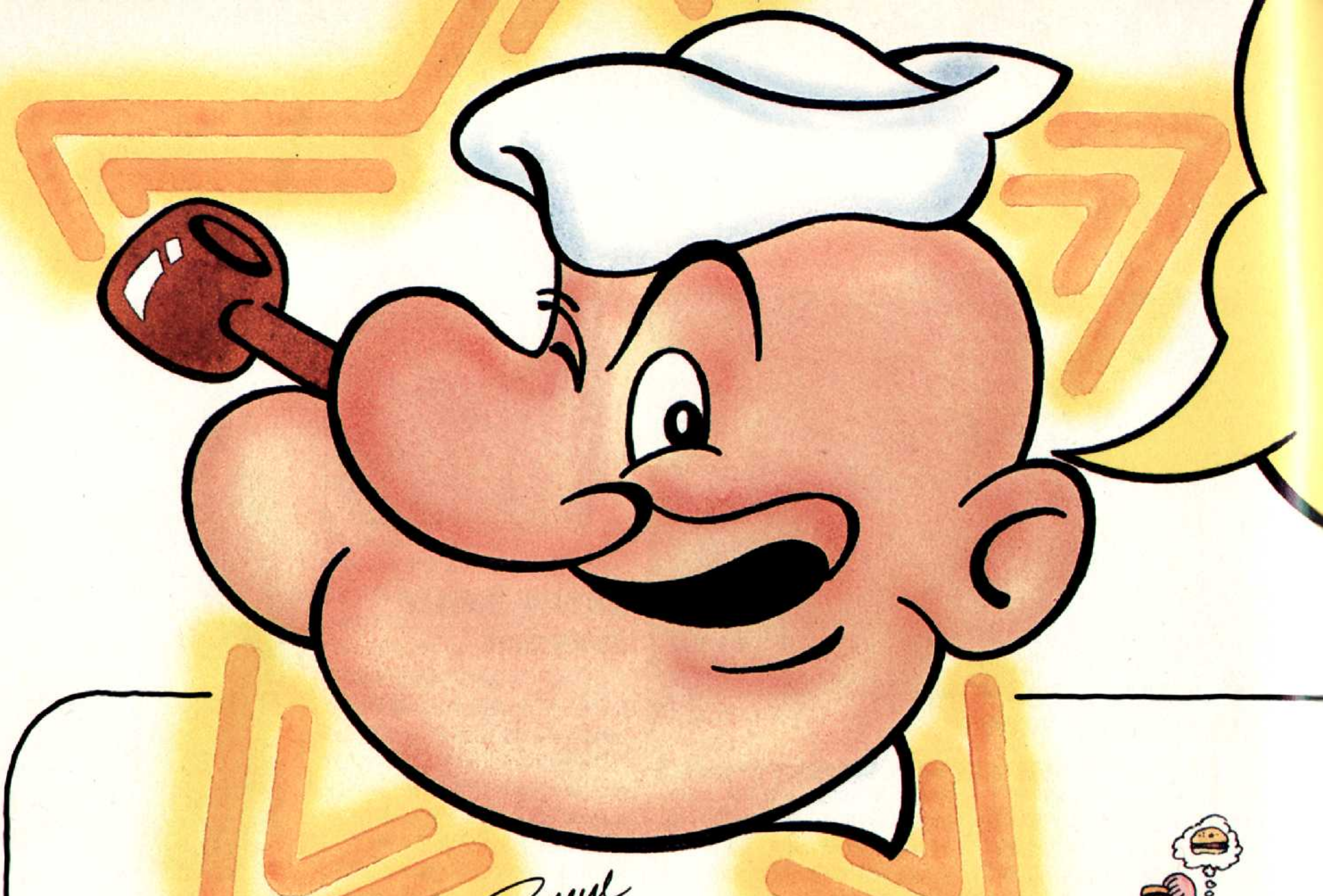
You may think a one-and-a-half inch joystick is made for little kids, but Amiga says their "Power-Stick" will improve *everybody's* scores. The shorter stick, it is claimed, gives faster, more direct control of screen objects and will withstand the rigors of rough play better than a big stick. The Power-Stick has been ergonomically designed (designed by ergs) to give true eight-way response. Carrying case and extra-long cord included. $9.95. *Amiga, 3350 Scott Blvd. Santa Clara, CA 95051.*



EXERCYCLE CONTROLLER

Now we've seen everything. For just $39.95, you can hook your exercycle up to your video game and play while you pedal. The Aerobic Joystick simply clips onto the bike and your pedaling acts as a fire button. In **Defender,** for instance, the faster you pedal, the faster you fire. In **Enduro** or **Grand Prix,** the faster you pedal, the faster your car goes. It's outrageous!

Suncom Inc., 650 Anthony Trail, Unit E, Northbrook, IL 60062.



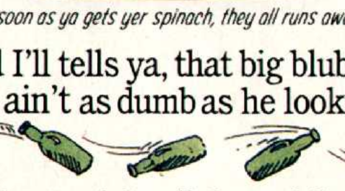
Popeye The Sailor Man

Ya gotsta capture Olive's hearts. Or else.

You thinks it's all fun and games bein the woild's most famousk sailor? Then, I suggests you tries it yerself.

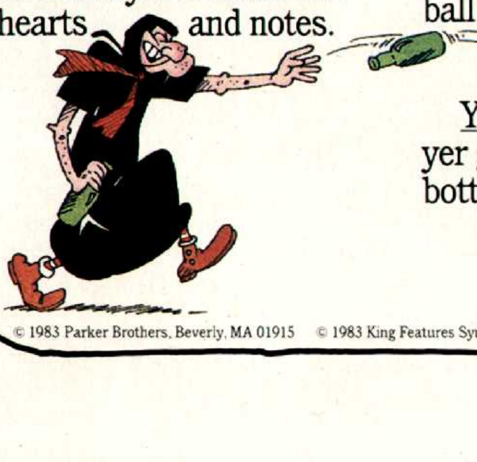
You try makin points with Olive Oyl, that fickle, damanding, stringbean of a dame. Likes you got nothin better to do than runnin around tryin to catch her hearts and notes.

You try bein chased around by that fat swab Brutusk, without a chance to catch yer breath.



As soon as ya gets yer spinach, they all runs away.

And I'll tells ya, that big blubber ball ain't as dumb as he looks.



You try doin all that whilst yer gettin pelted with beer bottles by that discustipatin Sea Hag. She ain't no lady, that's fer sure.

And you try fightin off the vultures whilst Olive screams for H-E-L-P.

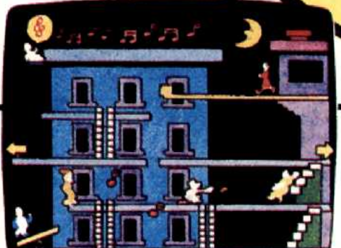
And you try to keep from gettin yerself killed by them bouncin skulls. I doesn't know where they comes from, but I doesn't like 'em one bit.

And woist of all, whilst you're doing all this,

Ya gotsta punch out these bottles before they punch you out (I hopes they're non-return).

© 1983 Parker Brothers, Beverly, MA 01915 © 1983 King Features Syndicate, Inc. Popeye is a registered trademark of and is licensed by King Features Syndicate, Inc. © 1983 Nintendo of America, Inc.

YA CAN'T BE WIMPY IF YA WANTS TA PLAY POPEYE.®



Olive drops notes whilst you runs around tryin to make points.

Ya thinks itsk fun tanglin with Brutusk? You try it.

they keeps movin the spinach around so's you can never find it when you needs it. Blow me down, it ain't hardly fair.

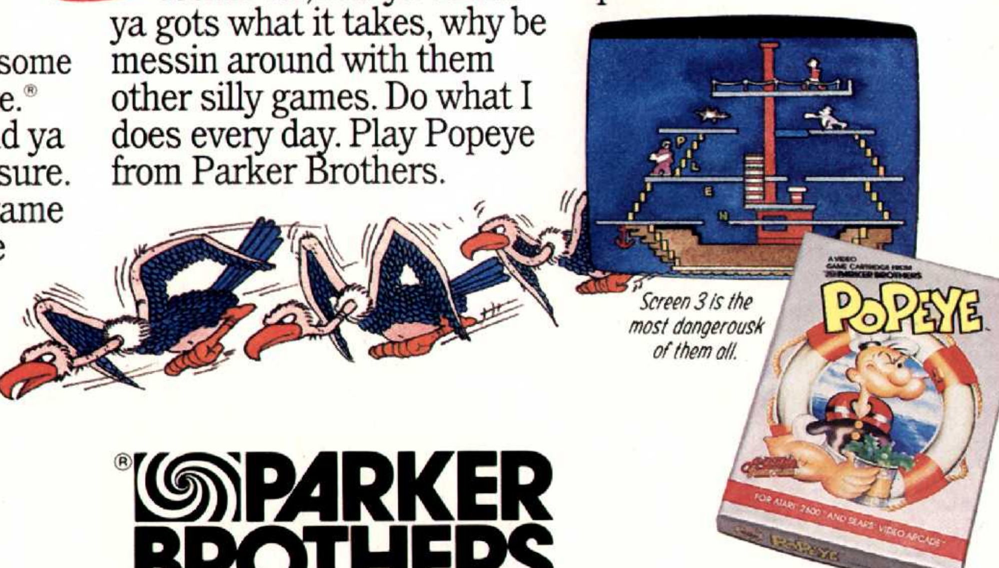
I'll tell ya, ya gotsta be some kinda sailor to play Popeye.®

You gotsta be fast. And ya gotsta thrive under pressure.

Cuz, me home video game is just like the hit arcade game by Nintendo... With three screens of non-stop action and incredulous graphics.

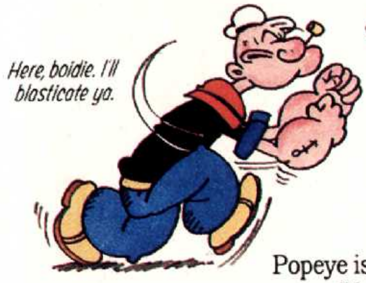
So's if it's a challenge yer lookin for, and ya thinks ya gots what it takes, why be messin around with them other silly games. Do what I does every day. Play Popeye from Parker Brothers.

Just one piece of advice. I doesn't suggest ya tries it if ya eats yer spinach in a quiche.



Screen 3 is the most dangerousk of them all.

A VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE FROM PARKER BROTHERS
POPEYE
FOR ATARI 2600 AND SEARS VIDEO ARCADE



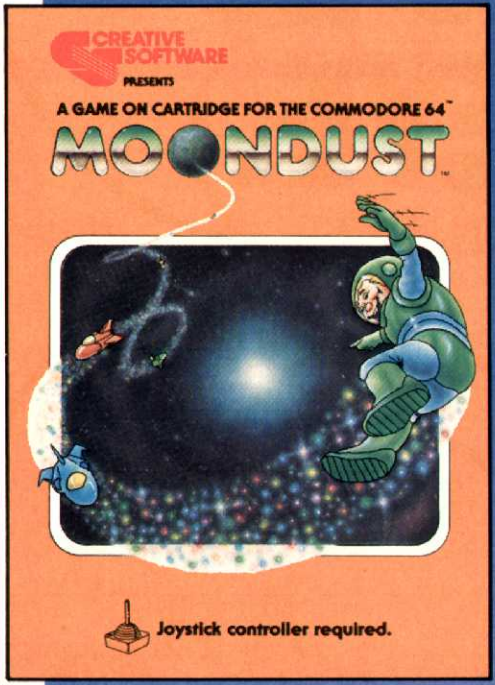
Here, boidie. I'll blasticate ya.

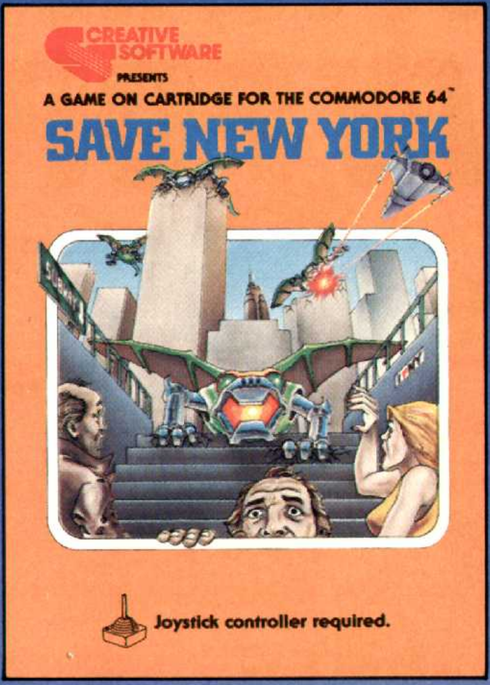
® PARKER BROTHERS

Popeye is available for Atari 2600, Intellivision, Atari 5200 and ColecoVision Systems; Plus Atari 400 and 800 and Commodore VIC 20 home computer systems.

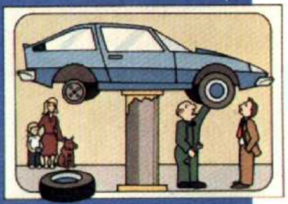
CREATIVE SOFTWARE

– the #1* independent VIC-20 full-line software publisher in the U.S. – is proud to announce 4 new Game Cartridges & 5 Home Applications for the COMMODORE 64.™


CREATIVE SOFTWARE
PRESENTS
A GAME ON CARTRIDGE FOR THE COMMODORE 64™
MOONDUST™
Joystick controller required.


CREATIVE SOFTWARE
PRESENTS
A GAME ON CARTRIDGE FOR THE COMMODORE 64™
SAVE NEW YORK
Joystick controller required.

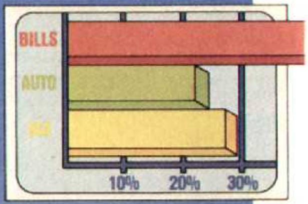
CAR COSTS
A HOME APPLICATION PROGRAM



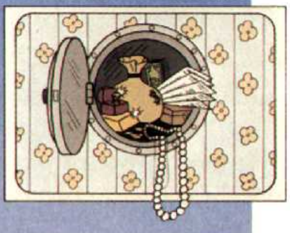
LOAN ANALYZER
A HOME APPLICATION PROGRAM

LOAN AGREEMENT
18%

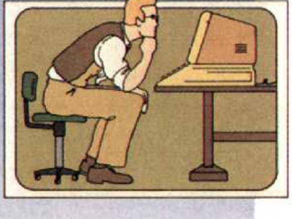
HOUSEHOLD FINANCE
A HOME APPLICATION PROGRAM

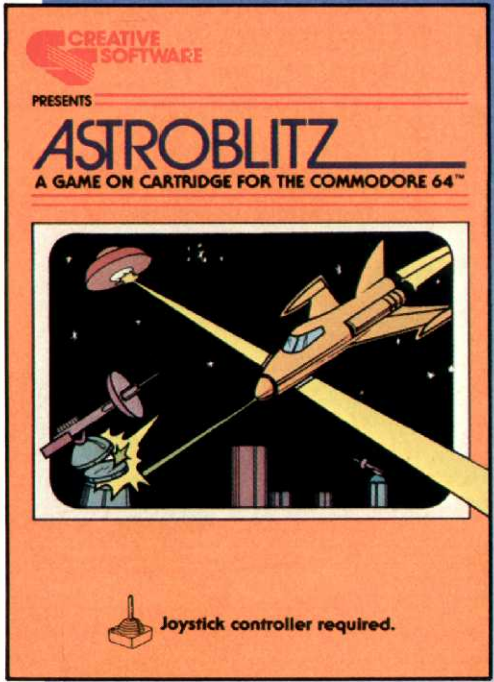

BILLS
AUTO
10%
20%
30%

HOME INVENTORY
A HOME APPLICATION PROGRAM

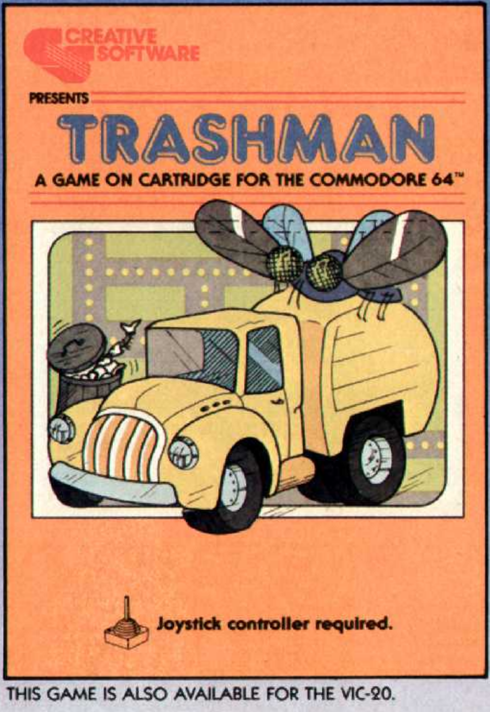


DECISION MAKER
A HOME APPLICATION PROGRAM




CREATIVE SOFTWARE
PRESENTS
ASTROBLITZ
A GAME ON CARTRIDGE FOR THE COMMODORE 64™
Joystick controller required.

THIS GAME IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR THE VIC-20.


CREATIVE SOFTWARE
PRESENTS
TRASHMAN
A GAME ON CARTRIDGE FOR THE COMMODORE 64™
Joystick controller required.

THIS GAME IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR THE VIC-20.

These Home Application Programs are also available for the VIC-20.

CREATIVE SOFTWARE
A Division of ASCI, Inc.
230 East Caribbean Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

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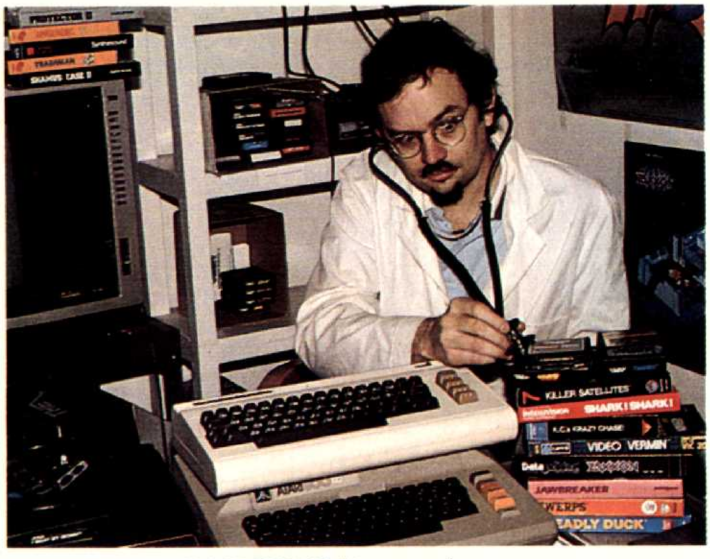
The Video Game Gazette

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PLAY

EXCLUSIVE!

DOCTOR SAYS *NOT* PLAYING VIDGAMES WILL KILL YOU!



DR. NORMAN GOLDCHAIN doing research.

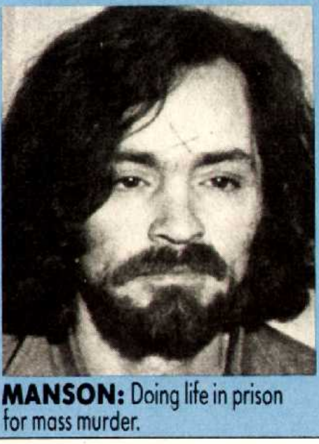
SHEBOYGAN UNIVERSITY—The medical world was rocked last week when Dr. Norman Goldchain presented his controversial new theory—that NOT playing video games can be hazardous to your health. "Hitler never played video games," Dr. Goldchain said, "Neither did Attila the Hun. And look what happened to them! Take any murderer, criminal or rapist in history and you'll find one thing they all had in common—they never played video games. This is proof that NOT playing video games is bad for you."

Dr. Goldchain went on to discuss the complete lack of video gaming in the lives of Lee Harvey Oswald and Charles Manson, and the observation that he has never run into any PLO terrorists while waiting in line at Pizza Time Theater.

When his findings were questioned by skeptical reporters, Dr. Goldchain provided graphic examples from his research: "Twelve-year-old Timmy Waters of Oak Falls, Ohio, who was run down and squashed flat by a mail truck while he was walking to school last May, might be alive today if he'd only played *Frogger* often enough to have sharpened his street-crossing skills and reflexes. Then there's the tragic case of seventeen-year-old Wally Fishbein, who fell off a ladder while painting his parents' house in Santa Monica, California, and broke his neck. Had Wally played *Donkey Kong* just twice a day for a mere two weeks, he would have certainly mastered the knack of nimble ladder-climbing and avoided such an untimely death."

Dr. Goldchain is presently under observation in Bellevue Hospital in New York.

THEY NEVER PLAYED VIDEO GAMES



MANSON: Doing life in prison for mass murder.

HITLER: Dictator and ruthless killer.

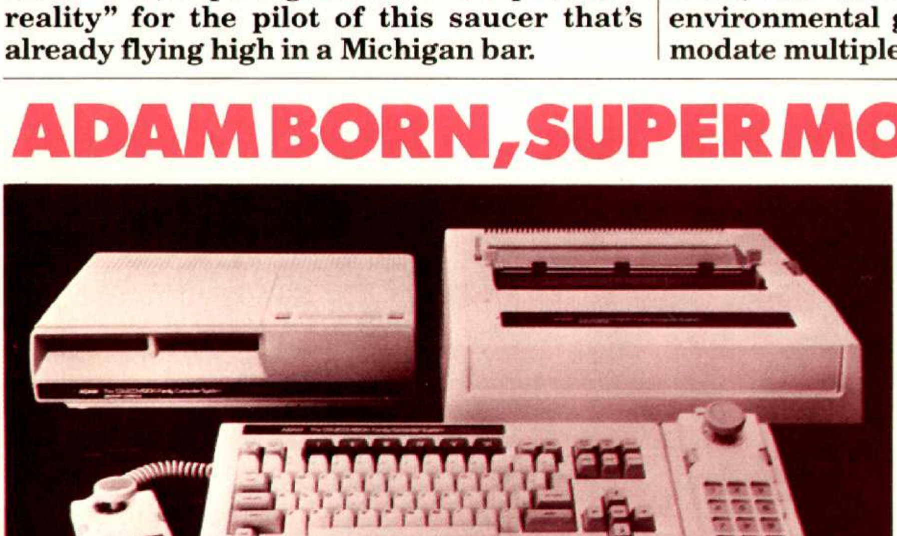
AMIN: He could have been playing *Frogger.*

IS THIS MAN A NUT CASE?

MICHIGAN–Used to be when you called someone an "environmentalist," it meant they were into trees, fresh air and trashing James Watt. That is, until John Sassak invented the *Saker-One*, a space game with "wrap-around reality" for the pilot of this saucer that's already flying high in a Michigan bar.

The ship bobs up and down on a 140 mph column of air. Built-in lasers blast enemy ships displayed on TV screens–all for two bucks! A coin-op version should be out by June, and other designers are developing environmental games that will even accommodate multiple players.

ADAM BORN, SUPER MODULE DIES



The much-heralded Coleco Super Game Module is dead. Instead, Coleco is releasing their Adam computer, one of which we will be giving away in the next issue. But what about those Super Games we heard about that had so much more game play than the regular Coleco games? They can all be played on Adam . . .

Turbo: Now you drive to the suburbs

Zaxxon: Two new asteroids

Gorf: Two new screens

Donkey Kong: Five screens, new enemies, intermissions

Smurf: Now he fights snakes

CARTS CAN BE REPROGRAMMED!

Even the best games get boring, so Romox is marketing a cartridge that can be reprogrammed with the new game of your choice. This is possible only with their patent-pending "ECPC" (Edge Connector Programmable Cartridge). Regular games use ROM cartridges that can't be reprogrammed.

All you'll have to do will be to visit the local shop, trade your old Romox cartridge for a blank one and pop the cart into one of nine slots on the Romox terminal. In less than a minute, you've got a new game, for only $10. In addition to lower prices, Romox will be electronically transmitting new games to the 1300 "Programming Terminals" around the country, so you won't have to wait months for new games.

Games for Atari VCS and all Atari computers, Commodore's 64 and VIC-20, and the TI 99/4A will be available in September. Plans are being made to provide cartridges for Mattel, Oddysey and other formats upon agreements with game publishers. Romox anticipates each terminal to eventually offer 500 games.

Bally MIDWAY
PROFESSOR PAC-MAN

WILL IT NEVER END?

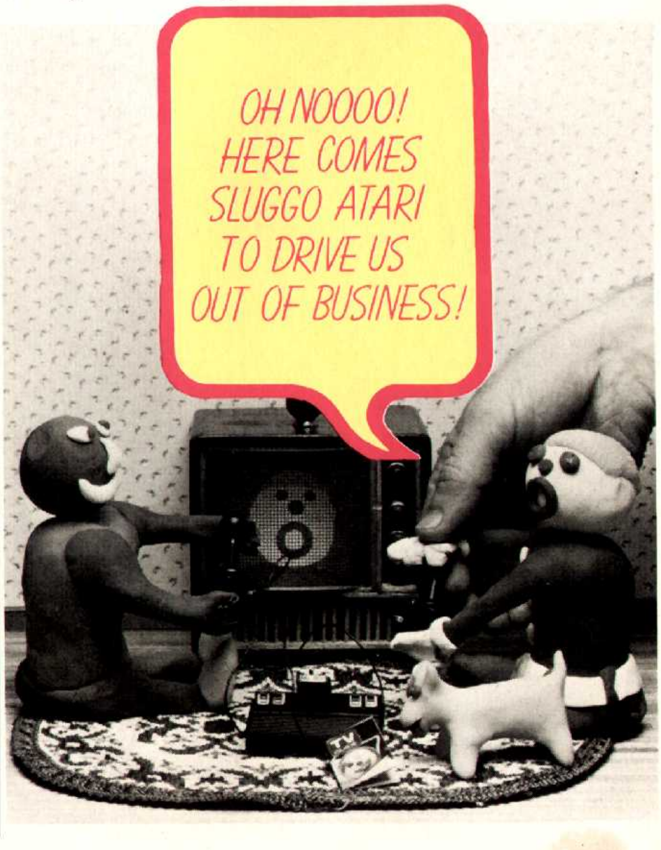
GAMES IN EVERY FORMAT

The day is rapidly approaching when we won't have to say, "I want to buy that game, but it doesn't fit my system." In recent months game manufacturers have been releasing games in multiple formats. For example, Fox's *Porky's* game is available for VCS, ColecoVision, VIC-20, Atari 400/800, and Texas Instruments. In addition, hardware manufacturers are putting out games for their competitors' machines. Mattel has its M Network, Odyssey is now making games for ColecoVision and Atari 5200, and even Atari has consented to make hits like *Pac-Man* for Apple, Commodore 64, VIC-20, IBM, TRS-80, and Texas Instruments.

WARGAMES OR MORE GAMES?

SEATTLE—"Nuke Salvador!" these fifth-graders inputted after thinking they'd tapped into a Pentagon computer ala *Wargames*. Fortunately their commands didn't get past the Apple computer that the Pacific Science Center has provided for students to try out.

The Center maintains 15 computers for this purpose, and says student response has been overwhelmingly positive. And though Brian and Greg here didn't get to vaporize Central America, they *did* get their first lesson in computer literacy.


OH NOOOO! HERE COMES SLUGGO ATARI TO DRIVE US OUT OF BUSINESS!
TV

INTELLIVISION
INTELLIVOICE
VOICE SYNTHESIS MODULE
INTELLIVISION II
MATTEL ELECTRONICS

MATTEL STRIKES BACK

Here comes Aquarius II, The Entertainment Computer System . . . and Intellivision IV!

It was a lot simpler last year. If you wanted a video game system, you either got an Atari VCS or Mattel's Intellivision. The VCS had more hit games and cost $140. Intellivision was running about $210 at the time, but it had better graphics. Odyssey[2] and Astrocade were a distant third and fourth.

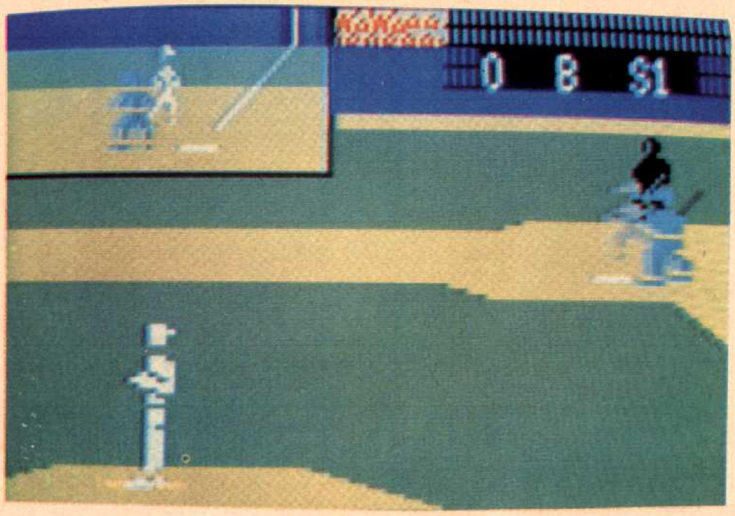
Then along came ColecoVision and the Atari 5200, which both had improved graphics, bigger memory, better game play and licensed titles like *Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, Defender* and *Zaxxon*. Mattel, which used to be number two, was left in the dust. The question was—

INTELLIVISION MUSIC SYNTHESIZER
INTELLIVISION COMPUTER ADAPTOR
MATTEL ELECTRONICS
INTELLIVISION COMPUTER KEYBOARD
MATTEL ELECTRONICS

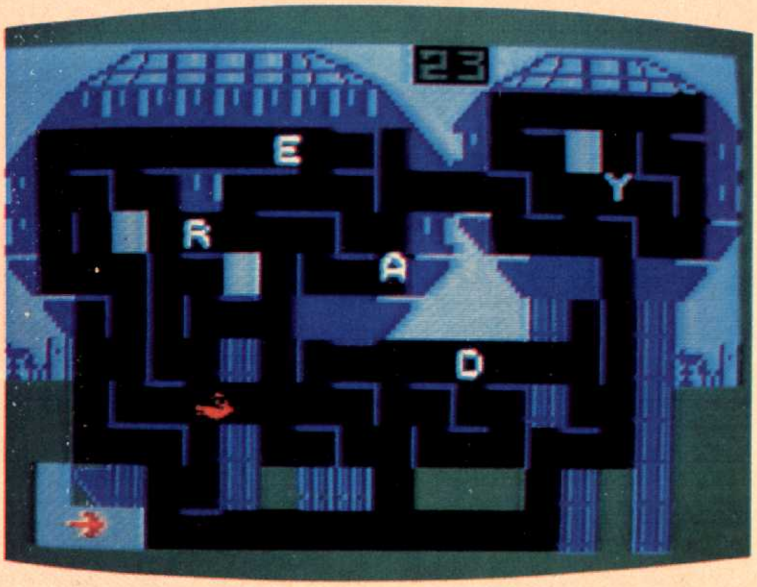
PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID RAWCLIFF

SUPERGRAPHICS

World Series Baseball



The Jetsons: Ways With Words



would they roll over and die . . . or would they stand up and fight back?

Intellivision II

Intellivision II is not much different from Intellivision, but it wasn't meant to be. It is a slimmed-down, higher-tech looking unit that serves one main purpose —to bring down the price of the Mattel game system. Intellivision II has been selling for as low as $99, with the choice of getting as a rebate either an Intellivoice unit and a $5 discount on any game, or a $50 rebate with the purchase of two games. Either way, the actual cost of the system, including rebates, is somewhere between $20 and $60, even lower than the Atari VCS.

There are a few improvements on the original Intellivision. A red LED light is provided so it isn't so easy to leave the unit on overnight accidentally. The cords are longer and *detachable,* so you don't have to send the whole system away to get the controller fixed. And detachable controllers open up the possibility of other companies making "deluxe" controllers. Fortunately, Mattel made all the game cartridges for Intellivision and Intellivision II compatible.

Most importantly, Intellivision II owners have the option of purchasing the System Changer, a device like the Coleco Expansion Module #1, which allows you to play Atari VCS cartridges. For the first time, Atari games and Intellivision games can be played on the same system.

M Network

When every company in the world was starting up last year to make games for the Atari VCS, Mattel jumped in, too. A lot of those companies are gone now, but Mattel has expanded M Network this year. Now they are making computer games. The first three games, compatible with the Apple and IBM computers, will be **Night Stalker, Lock 'N' Chase,** and the arcade hit **BurgerTime.**

Far from abandoning the old Atari VCS, this year M Network will release **Tron Deadly Discs, BurgerTime, Adventures of Tron, Mission X, Star Strike, Air Raiders, In Search of the Golden Skull, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, Rocky and Bullwinkle, Masters of the Universe, Kool-Aid Man,** and another recent arcade game, **Bump 'N' Jump.** Mattel used to sit back and let Atari, Coleco, and Parker Brothers snap up all the hit arcade licenses. Now they pursue them much more aggressively.

Intellivision Games

In addition to *BurgerTime,* owners of Intellivision and Intellivision II will be blessed with at least 16 new games in the near future. **Motocross** will simulate the breakneck world of motorcycle racing, and you will even be able to design your own race course. **Vectron** is a space game which will pit you against some nasty enemies—the Hungrees, the G-spheres, the splits, the sweeps, and the prizums. **All-Star Major League Baseball** is an improved version of the highly acclaimed *Major League Baseball* from a few years ago. In *All-Star,* you can kick up a cloud of dust as you slide into third base. Other Intellivision games will include **Loco Motion, Mission X, Buzz Bombers, Thin Ice, Royal Dealer, Mystic Castle,** and **Bump 'N' Jump.** Our only complaint is the lack of newer games for the Intellivoice module. If you've got **Tron Solar Sailer, Bomb Squad, B-17 Bomber** and **Space Spartans,** you've got them all.

A Long Time Ago . . .

In a galaxy far, far away, it seemed, George Plimpton promised that we would someday be able to turn our Intellivisions into computers. Finally, that day has come. The Intellivision Entertainment Computer System is, essentially, two peripherals that can be plugged into either Intellivision or Intellivision II to make them into more than just game machines.

The first peripheral, the Intellivision Computer Adaptor, plugs into the right side of the Intellivision. It features built-in BASIC program language, 2K RAM and will expand the sound capability of Intellivision. With the Computer Adaptor, of course, you get a keyboard. The 49 key keyboard is laid out like a typewriter, but the keys are more like those on a calculator, so they're really not made for writing long term papers. However, if you've never touched a computer before, you can learn many of the fundamentals on your Intellivision.

Mattel is releasing some very simple software programs to run on your Intellivision Computer. How can anybody be threatened by titles like **The Jetsons Ways with Words, Number Jumble,** and **The Flintstones Keyboard Fun?** In addition, you can learn BASIC with **Mr. BASIC Meets Bits 'N' Bytes** and **Program Builder.** Another program called **Game Factory** lets you program your own games. You can choose from a library of different characters or backgrounds, and you can even plug in some of your Intellivision games and borrow charac-

> **"In *World Series Major League Baseball,* you can program Fernando Valenzuela to try and strike out Babe Ruth."**

The other peripheral in the Entertainment Computer System is the Intellivision Music Synthesizer. This is a 49 key *piano*-type keyboard which must be purchased separately and plugged into the Computer Adaptor. With a **Music Tutor** or **Melody Blaster** cartridge, you can learn to read music, play the piano, and even write your own songs. *Melody Blaster* is actually a variation of *Astro-smash*—musical notes fall from the sky in the pattern of popular songs and you have to play the right keys to shoot them down.

Other peripherals, such as a Data Recorder, Intellivision Printer, and Intellivision Program Expander (adds 32K RAM and 12K ROM) will be available shortly.

The Aquarius Computer

Rather than turning your game system into a computer, some of you may just want to buy a *real* computer. For you, Mattel has created Aquarius. When Aquarius first came out, it caught a lot of flak from people, mainly because of its rinky-dink keyboard. The keys were calculator-type keys, and there wasn't even a space bar. It might have been useful for young children, but for everybody else, forget it.

Fortunately, Mattel realized Aquarius was a mistake, and now we have Aquarius II. In addition to a full-stroke typewriter keyboard, Aquarius II is more powerful than Aquarius—12K ROM and 20K RAM expandable to 64K. For those of you who are interested in such things, Aquarius II has a Z80A microprocessor, built-in Microsoft BASIC, 16 colors, 320 × 192 resolution, 40 × 24 character display, upper and lower case letters, CP/M capability. . . and even a space bar.

Naturally, the Aquarius is richly supplied with peripherals. The Aquarius Printer connects to the rear of the com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

AQUARIUS
AQUARIUS
AQUARIUS
AQUARIUS

Mattel's Aquarius computer—it took a lot of flak for its "calculator" keyboard. Aquarius II is coming at the end of the year, with more memory and keys you can type on.

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

ACTIVISION

Decathlon, Space Shuttle, Crackpots (VCS), Beamrider, Worm Whomper, Dreadnaught Factor (IN), River Raid, Kaboom (4/8/12).

ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL

War, Labyrinth of Crete, Triad (4/8/12). Tunnel Terror, Curse of Crowley Manor, Pirate Adventure, Triad (AP).

AMIGA

Mogul Maniac, Surf's Up, Off Your Rocker (VCS).

ATARI

Joust, Pole Position, Battlezone, Dig Dug, Moon Patrol (VCS & 5200). Jungle Hunt, Ms. Pac-Man, Road Runner, Goofy, Xevious, Baseball, Berzerk, Pengo, Tempest, Robotron (5200). Cookie Monster, Alpha Beam, Big Bird, Dumbo Flying Circus, Miss Piggy Wedding, Pigs in Space, Charlie Brown, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Krull, Snow White, Dumbo (VCS).

AVALON HILL

London Blitz, Death Trap, Wall Ball (VCS). Runnequest, Dragon Pass, Elric.

BRODERBUND

Lode Runner, Drol, Spare Change (AP). Cargo Bay (4/8/12). Solo (VCS). Sky Blazer (VCS & VIC). Choplifter, Serpentine (5200 & 64). A.E. (VIC). Seafox (VIC & 64). David's Midnight Magic (64).

CBS ELECTRONICS

Targ, Kickman, Tunnel Runner (VCS). K-Razy Antics, K-Star Patrol (VIC). Wizard of Wor, Gorf (5200 & IN). Wings, Domino Man, Madden Football (5200, IN, COL, 4/8/12). Solar Fox (IN, 4/8/12, 5200). Blue-Print (5200, IN, 4/8/12). Mountain King (VCS, 5200, COL). K-Razy Shootout (5200). Omega Race (5200, VCS, IN, 4/8/12). Satan's Hollow (5200, 4/8/12).

COLECO

Time Pilot, Tarzan, Wild Western, Front Line, Subroc, Destruction Derby.

COMMAVID

Rush Hour, Stronghold (VCS).

CREATIVE SOFTWARE

Save New York (64). Mutants in Subway. Rat Hotel, Pipes (VIC).

DATAMOST

Conquering Worlds, New Human Fly, Ardy the Aardvark, Space Ark, Cavern Creatures, The Biletoads, Snowbound (AP). Cosmic Tunnels, Wiz N Roo, Mail Boy, Night Raiders (4/8/12). Topsee Turvee, Jet Boot Jack, Paint Wizard (64 & 4/8/12). Monster Smash (64, AP, 4/8/12). Venus Voyager (64). Roundabout (VIC, AP, 4/8/12).

DATASOFT

Moon Shuttle, O'Riley's Mine (4/8/12). Dallas, Pooyan (4/8/12, TRS, AP, VIC, 64). Zaxxon (AP).

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Hard Hat Mack, Axis Assassin (AP). Archon, M.U.L.E., Worms? (4/8/12).

EPYX

SWAT Rescue, Gateway to Apshai, Lunar Outpost, Pit-Stop, Rom's Revenge, Silicon Warrior, Jumpman Junior, Seawolf II, Gun Fight, Circus, Spectar, Fire One, Star Fire, Oil Barons, Dragonriders of Pern.

FIRST STAR

Soap Suds (VCS). Rent Wars, Flip Flop (4/8/12 & 5200). Bristles (4/8/12, AP, VIC, 5200).

FOX

Porky's, Mash II, Fall Guy (VCS, VIC, COL, TI, 4/8/12).

GAMESTAR

Star League Baseball, Adventures of Dutch Dugan (4/8/12).

GCE

Pole Position, Star Castle, Batter Up, Dark Tower (VEC).

IMAGIC

Beezer (IN). Tarantula, Solar Storm, Hop To It (VCS). Fathom (VCS, COL, VIC, 4/8/12, IN). Moonsweeper (VCS, VIC, 4/8/12, IN, COL). Nova Blast (VCS, IN, COL, 4/8/12, VIC). Flap (VIC, IN, 4/8/12).

INFOCOM

Suspended (AP). Enchanter, Planetfall.

KONAMI

Pooyan, Strategy X, Scramble, Marine Wars (VCS).

MATTEL

Kool-Aid Man, Bump 'N' Jump, Masters of Universe (IN, VCS). Vectron, Motocross, Rocky and Bullwinkle (IN). Mission X, Loco Motion (VCS). Burgertime (AP, IBM, IN, VCS). Night Stalker (IBM, AP).

ODYSSEY

Adventures of the Pink Panther (VCS & COL). Power Lords (VCS, COL, ODY). Cavern (COL).

PARKER BROTHERS

Q*Bert (VCS, 4/8/12, VIC, 5200, 64). AstroChase (VCS). Popeye, Risk, Chess (4/8/12). Super Cobra (VCS, 4/8/12). Tutankham (VIC). Frogger (VIC & 4/8/12).

PENGUIN

Pie Man, Crime Wave, Spy's Demise, Transylvania, Thunderbombs (AP).

ROKLAN

Castle Hassle, Rockball, Eyes, Da' Fuzz, Lifespan (4/8/12).

ROMOX

Taxi, Sea Chase, Waterworks, Topper, Starion (4/8/12). Hen Pecked, Ant Eater (TI). Princess and Frog (TI & VIC).

SEGA

Congo Bongo, Buck Rogers, Star Trek (VCS, 5200, VIC, 4/8/12, TI). Thunderground (VCS).

SIRIUS

Ozzie Ozone, Wayout, Shadow Scorcher (64). Critical Mass, Gruds In Space (AP). Cineman, Wavy Navy, Alpha Shield, Capture the Flag (4/8/12). Fast Eddie, Snake Byte, Turmoil (VIC & 64). Final Orbit, Spider City (VIC, 4/8/12). Squish 'Em, Repton (VIC, 64, 4/8/12). Buzzard Bait (AP & IBM). Plasmania (AP & VIC). Type Attack (4/8/12 & VIC).

SIERRA ON-LINE

Jawbreaker (4/8/12). Golf, Mouskattack (IBM).

SPECTRAVIDEO

Frantic Freddy, Armored Assault, Spectron, Super Cross Force, Renegade, Space Swarm, Frogger, Quest for Tires (SPEC).

SPINNAKER

Alphabet 200, Cosmic Life, Delta Drawing, Delta Music, Facemake, Up for Grabs (4/8/12 & 64).

STARPATH

Rabbit Transit, Sweat, Survival Island, Party Mix, Sword of Saros (VCS). Dragonstomper, Escape from Mindmaster (COL, 4/8/12). Phaser Patrol (COL).

SYNAPSE

Protector II, Picnic Paranoia, Pharoah's Curse, Shadow World, Dimension X, Blue Max (4/8/12). Astro Patrol, Squeeze, Salmon Run (VIC). Fort Apocalypse, Survivor (64). Shamus (64, AP, TRS). Drelbs (4/8/12 & 64).

TELESYS

The Impossible Game (VCS).

THORN EMI

Orc Attack, River Rescue (4/8/12). 4th Encounter, Sub Commander (VIC). War Games (VIC, 4/8/12, TI).

TIGERVISION

Miner 2049er (VCS). Polaris (VCS, 4/8/12, VIC, TI).

TRONIX

Deadly Skies, Gold Fever, Scorpion (VIC). Juice (4/8/12, 64).

UMI

Pennant Drive, Word Feud, Grand Master, Fuego (VIC & 64).

VCS=Atari VCS, IN=Intellivision, 5200=Atari 5200, 4/8/12=Atari 400/800/1200 computers, COL=ColecoVision, GEM=Coleco Gemini, VIC=Commodore VIC-20, 64=Commodore 64, AP=Apple II, TRS=Radio Shack TRS-80, TI=Texas Instruments TI 99/4A, VEC=Vectrex, IBM=IBM PC, ODY=Odyssey², SPEC=Spectravideo computer.

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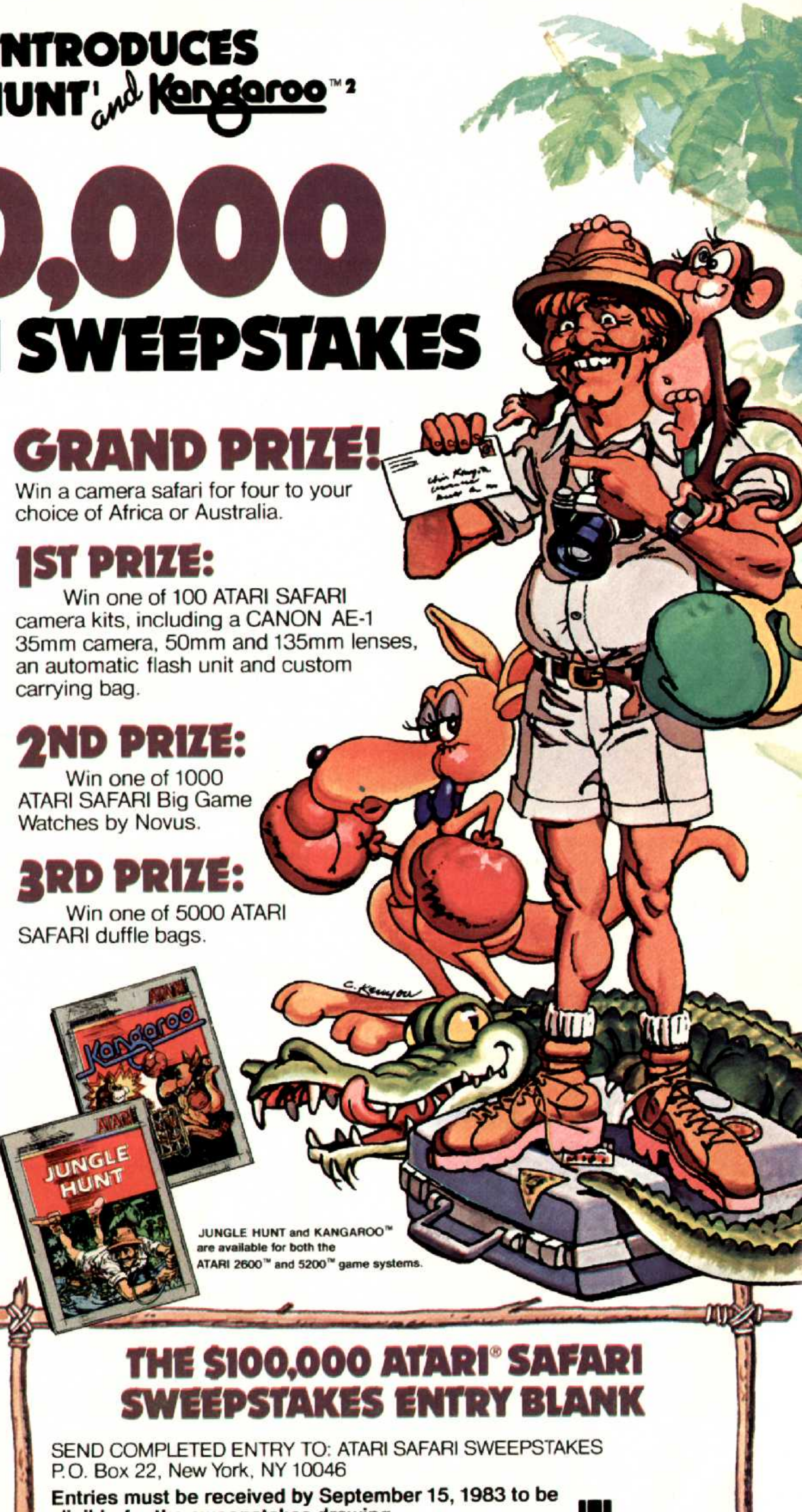

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2. Send as many entries as you like; one entry per envelope. Entries must be received by September 15, 1983.

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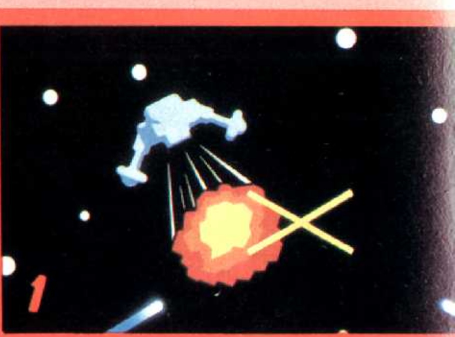
CONTEST!

NAME THAT ALIEN!

Know the enemy! These words are as true in video games as they are in military warfare. Can you name the games represented by the creeps on this page? Write them all down on a numbered sheet of paper and send them to us. You may be the winner!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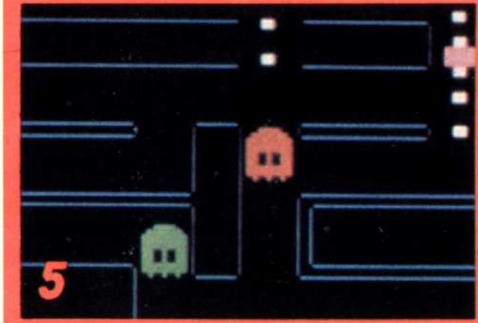
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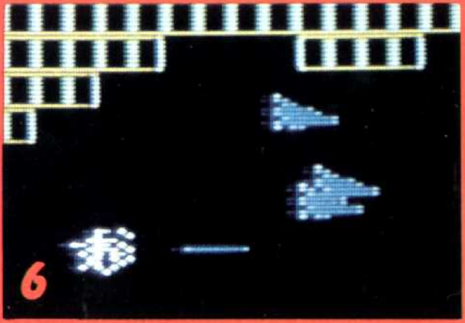
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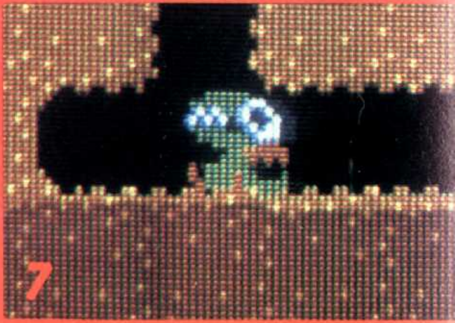
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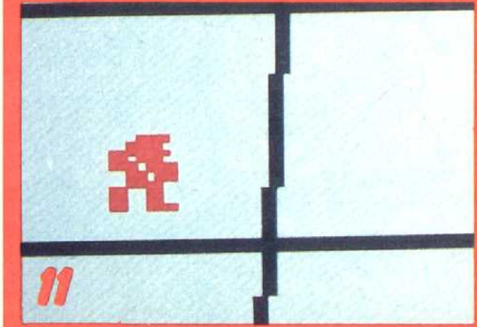
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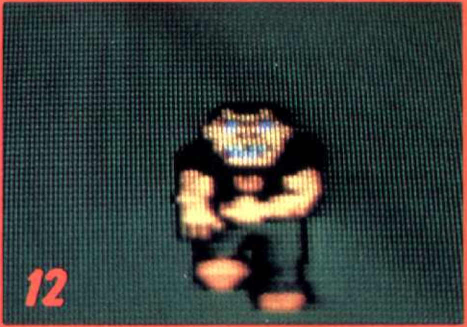
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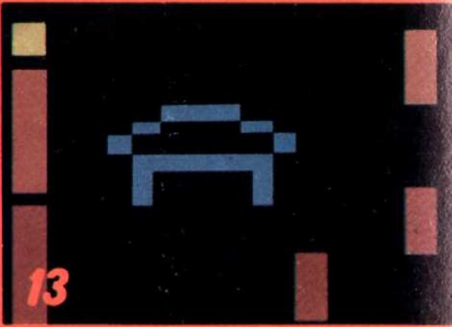
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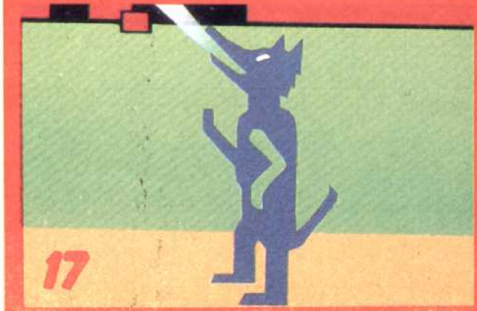
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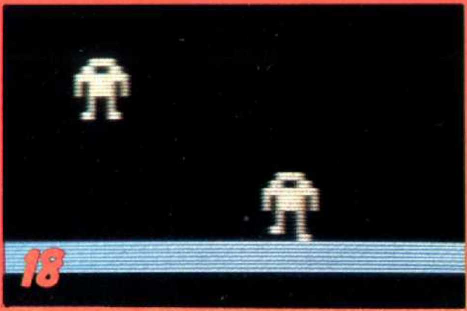
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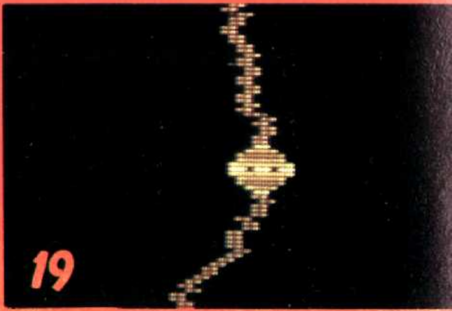
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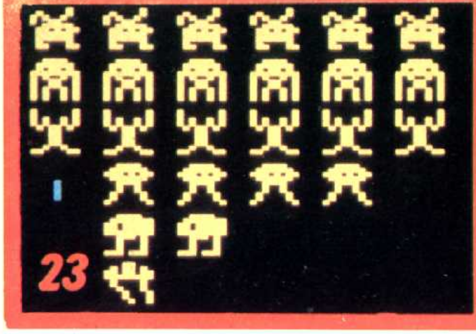
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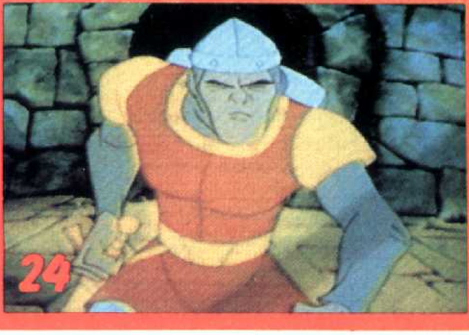
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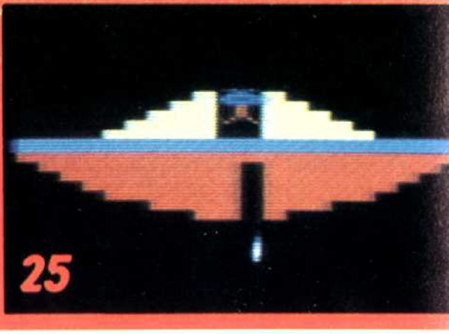
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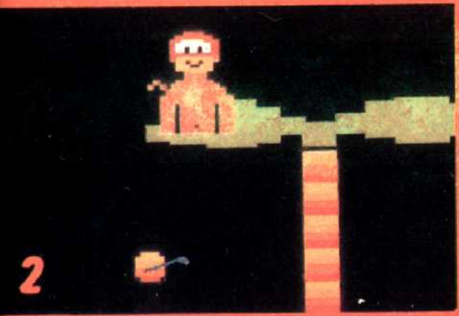
WIN AN ACTIVISION CARTRIDGE LIBRARY!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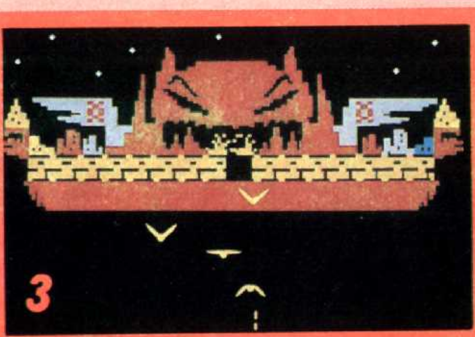
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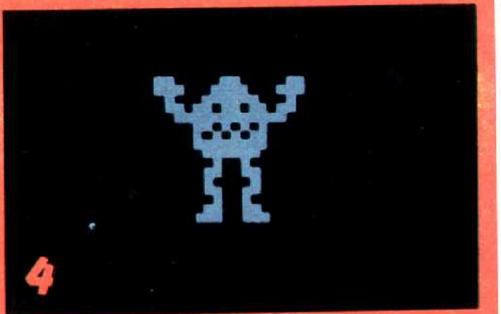
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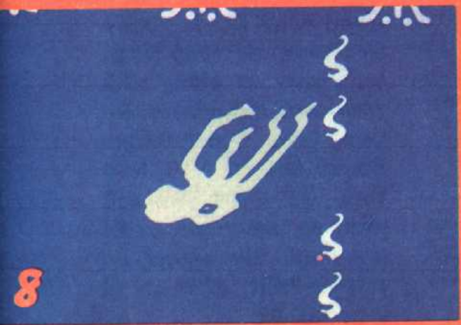
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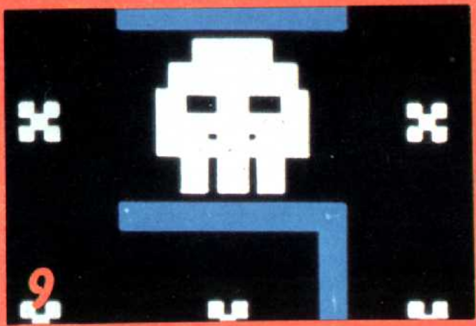
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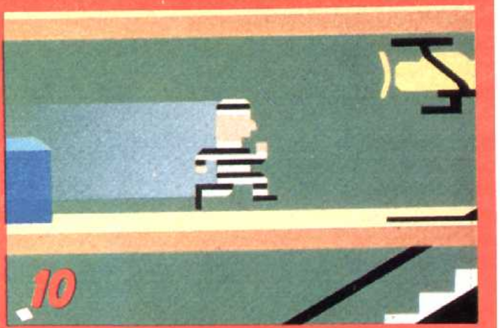
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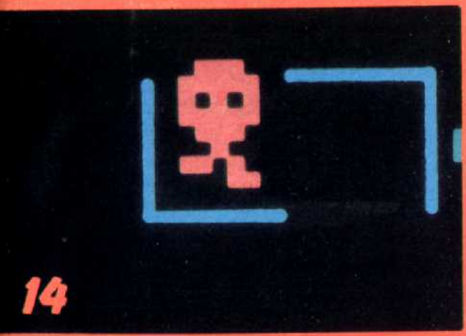
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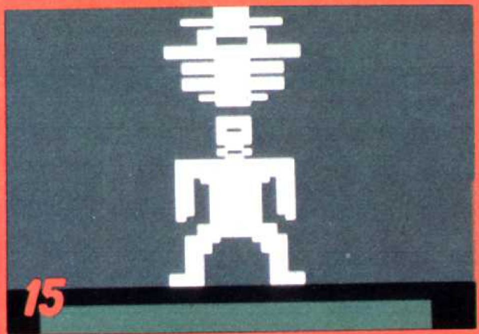
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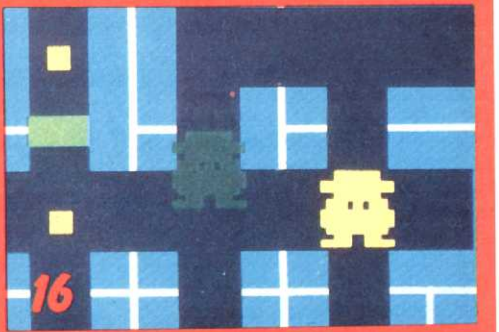
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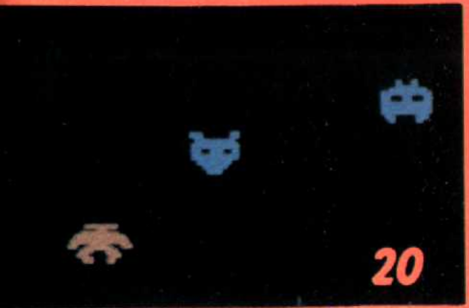
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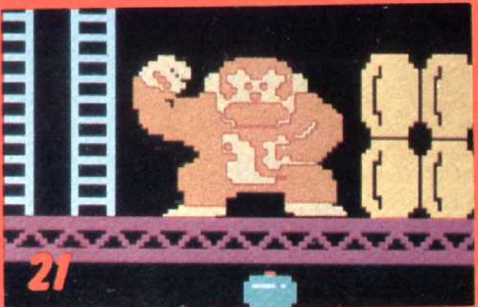
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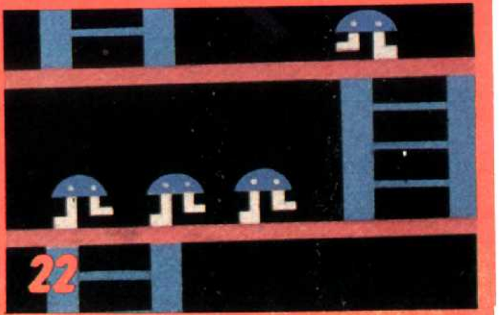
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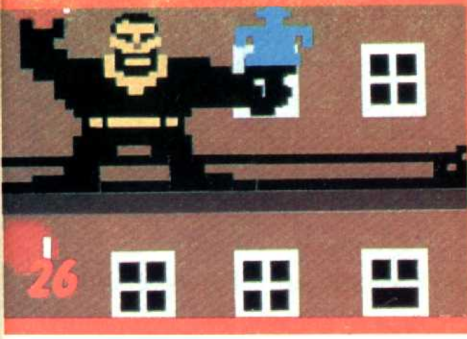
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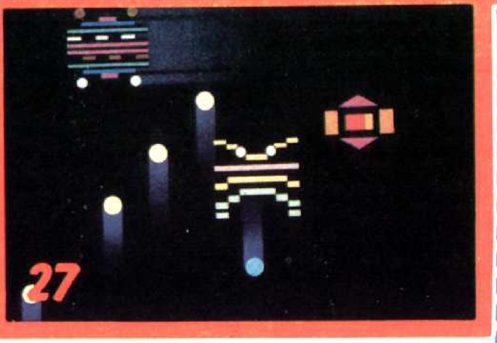
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Here's my entry! The attached sheet proves I know the enemy better than anybody.

Send to: Video Games Player, 888 7th Ave.,
New York, NY 10106

Name ______________________
Address ____________________
City __________ **State** ______ **Zip** ______

FINE PRINT: The Activision games are: Pitfall, Chopper Command, Starmaster, Megamania, Kaboom, Ice Hockey, River Raid, Seaquest, Spider Fighter, Keystone Kapers, Dolphin, Enduro. If there is more than one correct entry, we will randomly choose one of them. This contest is void where prohibited by law, so don't give us a hard time about it, okay?

SWAP SHOP

Do you have some old games or equipment that you're tired of? Do you want to sell them or trade them for something else? The Swap Shop is a free (no catches, no strings attached, no ripoffs) service to our readers.

Unique swap deal. The following VCS cartridges for sale or trade: **E.T., Demon Attack, Combat, Defender, Spiderman,** and **Gorf.** Games I want in return: **Centipede, M Network Baseball, Phoenix** and **Miner 2049er.** Ricky Foster, 1753 Redwood Ave., Hanover Park, Illinois 60103.

Selling games for the Atari 2600 and the Commodore VIC-20 computer. For the 2600—**Bowling**. For the VIC—**Mission Impossible**. Best offer accepted. Mr. Dan Wilhelm, 400 West Baseline #313, Tempe, Arizona 82583.

Intellivision games for sale or trade. **Astrosmash** and **Utopia**. Best offer. Bobby Forte, 10 Orchard St., Millbury, Massachussetts 01527.

I want to sell my Intellivision along with 11 cartridges, a few of which are: **Tron Deadly Discs, Tron Maze-A-Tron, Dungeons and Dragons** and **Night Stalker**. $200 or best offer for the whole package. John Kolesar, 1996 N. Lafox, South Elgin, Illinois 60177.

Cartridges for the Astrocade system for sale. **Bally Basic, Galactic Invasion, Pinball** and six other games. Best price. also, I have an Astrocade system which is broken if anybody wants to make me an offer for it. J. A. Armstrong, 104 South Roby Drive, Anderson, Indiana 46012.

I am selling my entire 40 cartridge Atari VCS game library. You can buy it all or in pieces. Also, my VCS is for sale. It is fine for paddle games, but slightly defective for joystick games on the left controller. Best offer. Eugene Grandy, 2706 West 33rd St., Brooklyn, New York 11224.

Selling cartridges for Atari, Coleco and Intellivision. Lowest prices around. Send 50 cents for my catalogue. Also looking to buy used cartridges for Atari, Coleco and Intellivision. All titles. Andrew Pachnik, 17163 Strasburg, Detroit, Michigan 48205.

Atari games for sale or trade, best offer. **Street Racer, Flag Capture, Breakout, Yar's Revenge, Adventure, Space Invaders, Berzerk, Star Ship, Missile Command.** I will listen to all trade possibilities. Keith Kugell, Box 9, Oxford, Maine 04270.

Classic VCS games for swap. **Pac-Man, Kaboom, Frogger** and **Asteroids.** Trade for any possibles, especially **Centipede** and **Ms. Pac-Man.** Will listen to any offers. Jim Murphy, 329 Toftrees Ave., State College, Pennsylvania 16801.

Anybody want my **Combat**? I don't know why anybody would, but I just thought I'd ask. Looking to buy, cheap: **Frogger, Star Raiders, Cosmic Arc, Planet Control, Vanguard, Berzerk.** Bill Anderson, 150 Norman Rd., Newark, New Jersey 07106.

I'm selling these games I designed for the Atari 400/800 computer. **Wall War** is a disc for $29.95. **Mr. Cool** is a cartridge, price not fixed yet. Also available from Sierra On-Line. Peter Oliphant, 4405 The Strand, Apt. A, Manhattan Beach, California 90266.

For sale. Twenty Atari cartridges and ten Intellivision cartridges. Dennis Rangel, 3718 Ruidosa, Dallas, Texas 75228.

Games for the Intellivision for sale: **Soccer** and **Astrosmash**. $12 each. Also looking to purchase other games for Intellivision and ColecoVision. Get in touch. Peter Gade, 209 Comly Road, Apt. F-23, Lincoln Park, New Jersey 07035.

I want to sell: **Space Jockey** by U.S. Games. It will be a collector's item some day. I want to buy: **Rip-Off** for Vectrex. Gary Gonzalez, 12019 Rose Ave., Los Angeles, California 90066.

For sale, at best offer. Atari VCS cartridges—**Haunted House** and **Pac-Man**. Also, if there is anybody out there who wants to sell some good games for the Texas Instruments 99 4/A, please get in touch with me. Hepburn Stroman, 843 Law Lane, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina 29464.

Numerous Intellivision cartridges for sale or swap. **Astrosmash, Tron Deadly Disc, Night Stalker, Football, Tron Maze-A-Tron, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, Donkey Kong, Sea Battle, Beauty and the Beast, Space Spartans** and some others. I am interested in getting **Swords and Serpents, Microsurgeon, Atlantas, Truckin'** and **Dracula**. James C. Hernandez, 1006 Magnolia Ave., Placentia, California 92670.

Starpath Supercharger for sale. Used. but like new. $20. Rick S. Butler, 4559 Capitol Reef Ct., San Jose, California 95136.

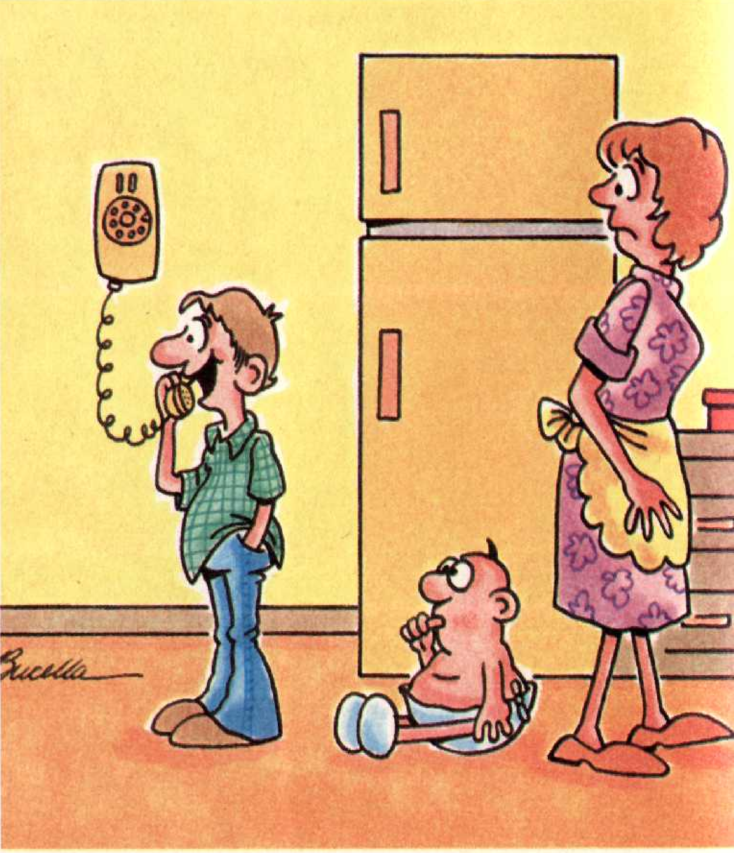
ColecoVision owners! Want to buy my **Cosmic Avenger** cart? In return, I am interested in buying other ColecoVision games, especially the newer releases. Brett Lawler, 4070 Franks Drive, Tucker, Georgia 30084.

I just bought an Atari 5200 and am looking for games for it. Also I am selling my **Golf** cartridge for the 2600. Brian Emrisko, 116 Patti Drive, St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950.

How would you like to own **Freeway, Surround, Superman, Frogger** and **Atlantis**? Write me. I am interested in swapping these for some of your games. All others considered. Edward Thomas Robinson, 20 Osborne Ave., Reading, Massachusetts 01867.

I am interested in buying used cartridges for the Coleco-Vision system, especially **Gorf** and **Pepper II**. Do you have any you want to part with? Greg Smith, 601 South East 68th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68106.

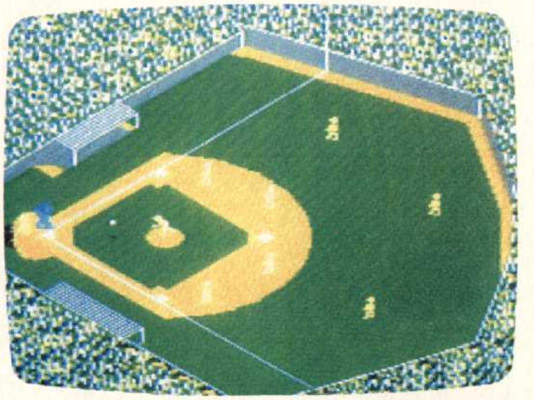
If you would like to place a free ad in the Swap Shop, send your ad along with your name and address to: Swap Shop, Video Games Player, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106. We will print as many ads as fit the page. We accept no responsibility after an ad is published.

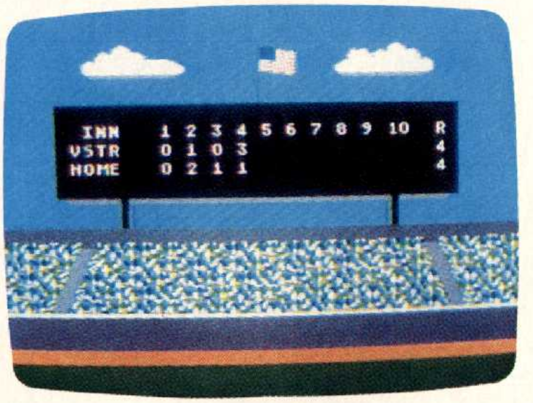


"It's a deal. I'll trade you my baby brother for your Enduro cartridge."

Star League™ Baseball.

It Makes Dreams Come True On The Atari® 400/800/1200XL™ And Commodore 64.™





INN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	R
VSTR	0	1	0	3							4
HOME	0	2	1	1							4

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THE VIDEO GAME PIRATES

Illegal ripoff games have infested the arcades . . . and YOU may be playing them

By Michael Blanchet

NOBODY MAKES A MONKEY OUT OF ME!'' THE pudgy arcade owner slammed his fist down on the desk. ''I want youse to nail the guy dat sold me these bootleg Donkey Kongs—Congorillas, he called 'em. One of those suckers blew up last week and took eight of my best players with it!''

This was the kind of case I lived for. I patted the bulging .357 magnum under my trenchcoat and smiled

thinly. "I'll take my buddies Smith and Wesson along for insurance."

The L.A. fog rolled in like a wave of Galaxian cruisers as I gunned the Ford down La Cienega Boulevard. The address he'd given me turned out to be a rundown warehouse on the bad side of town. I crushed a Lucky Strike under my heel and cased the joint.

Peering in a window, I spied a sleazy dwarf screaming on the phone. I slapped an ultra-sonic bug on the window, popped in the earplug and listened in. "You kiddin'?" he said, "I got new Pac-Mans for $1200!" I knew those games cost over two grand, so the dwarf had to be dealing ripoff merchandise.

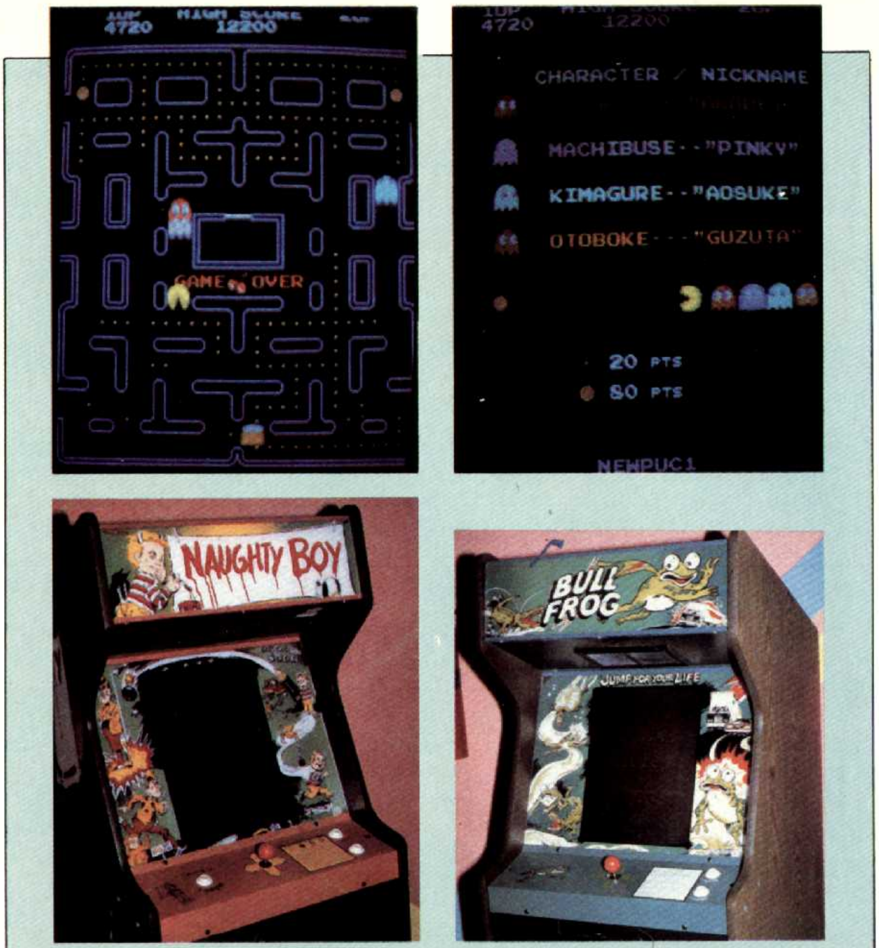
"You've ripped off your last game, dwarf!" I yelled as I kicked open the door and threw down on him with my rod. He just laughed, and I didn't know why until the blackjack hit me from behind and the lights went out.

I finally came to and found myself tied up in back, surrounded by empty crates marked "Taiwan to USA—3rd Class." In the corner, a stooge was attaching a Congorilla sign on a game. "Dump this nerd in a crate and drop it in the bay," the dwarf cackled, crushing my good joystick hand underfoot as he walked past.

Video Game Detectives

The names have been changed to protect the innocent, but this is only a slightly twisted version of the latest case of an investigator who specializes as a "Video Games Detective," hiring himself out to arcade owners, video game companies and independent software companies.

Like hundreds of other distributors across the country, "the dwarf" dealt in bootleg games—illegal copies of machines designed and manufactured by other firms. Crooks like these usually display some legitimate games in their showrooms as a front, but rarely sell anything but ripoffs. Sal was raking in the bucks by selling what he felt were identical machines for a lot less than distributors selling the real games. But he was breaking the law, and you're one of his victims, too.



Notice that "Newpuc 1" *has three tunnels on each side instead of* Pac-Man*'s two. The ripoff also has Japanese nicknames.* Bull Frog *is a near-perfect* Frogger *ripoff. The* Naughty Boy *ripoff actually beat the legitimate* Naughty Boy *into the arcades!*

Video games can be copied as easily as records and movies. All you need is the right equipment. Or the right connections. "The dwarf" wasn't copying the games himself. He merely bought the logic boards from an electronics company in Taiwan. Each board contained a program similar to the one in a popular video game. Then he installed the boards in wooden cabinets along with a monitor and a power supply. These cabinets are then painted and given names. To avoid being too obvious, **Pac-Man**, for example, was changed to **Puck-Man**. If a customer asks, the ripoff explains that **Pac-Man** and **Puck-Man** are different for one reason or another. But you aren't buying a first-rate machine. You're getting a copy and a bad one at that. Likewise, anyone who plays the game won't get his or her quarter's worth.

Where do bootleg games come from? Except for the garage operations that copy only a handful of games, most high volume bootleg factories are located overseas. For the private distributor, exportation is the cheapest way to do business. Labor is inexpensive and, most importantly, there are no copyright laws protecting video game software in the Far East. The finished circuit boards are then shipped stateside—where jerks like "the dwarf" put them in cabinets and peddle them off as the real thing.

Making a Ripoff

The games are so cheap because of several factors. The logic boards are copied, for starters. No game designers to pay, no research and development costs (potentially the most expensive part of the manufacturing process). Secondly, the materials used in the actual construction of the machine are of poor quality. Flimsy plywood cabinets, possibly used already, are substituted for strong particle board cabinets.

Corners are also cut with the game controllers. This is where the player can detect a fake from the real McCoy. In an Italian-made copy of **Centipede**, for example, a joystick was used instead of a trackball. Why? It's cheaper, of course. I asked one bootleg dealer about the joystick on the game that was supposed to be **Centipede** (the name on the top said **Bug Blaster**) and he said the stick worked better than the trackball. I played the game and was surprised that it looked like the real thing. The joystick, though, only moved in four directions. Furthermore, there was only one firing button instead of two, so **Bug Blaster** was almost unplayable by left-handed people. To top it off, the rapid-fire feature had been deleted because, according to this crook, the original **Centipede** was too easy. Who would want to play a game like *that* ripoff?

Bootlegs—Low Scores

Whether we realize it or not, most of us have probably played a bootleg game at one time or another. Because of the cheap construction, bootlegs don't respond as well as a legitimate, well-constructed game.

Since pirated games are illegal, you're not likely to find them in big arcades or other high-traffic areas. Operators (that's the machine's owner) generally place them in offbeat locations such as small corner delis, pizzerias, movie theatres, convenience stores and gas stations. Anyplace you wouldn't expect to find a video game is a good spot for a bootleg game.

The actual copying can be done a number of ways. The most popular method involves using a machine called an EPROM Duplicator. After acquiring an authentic logic board, the pirate must remove each of the integrated circuits. Each IC is about half the size of a book of matches. The game program, or computer code, has been "burned" into each of the ICs. These half dozen or so wafer-thin bits of plastic and metal are the heart of the video game. They determine what you see, what you do, how many lives you get and so forth.

The programmed IC is then plugged into the duplicator, along with a blank. When the duplicator is switched on, the information contained in the programmed chip is burned into the blank. Once a complete set of ICs has been made, the pirate refers to a schematic that tells him how to build the rest of the logic board. Once the chips are plugged back into the completed circuit board the copy artist has a duplicate of the original—a clone. In an attempt to avoid any legal trouble, the pirate may make some minute changes in the attract mode, the game title or the game characters.

What does all this mean to you, the player? Let's look at it in another light. Suppose you want a copy of the new Bruce Springsteen album but you don't have the money to buy it. Your best friend already has it so you ask to borrow it. You take it home and record it off your stereo. For the price of a blank cassette, you now have a perfect copy. You return the record to your friend and everyone's happy—your buddy has his album and you have your tape.

But what about Springsteen? Since you copied his record instead of buying it, "The Boss" has lost out on a royalty that he is legally due. The record store has lost a sale. Sure, your one tape isn't going to cause Wall Street to collapse—but what would happen if 100,000 or maybe a million people copied that one record? The record store would certainly go out of business. Bruce Springsteen would also have to find another job because songwriting would no longer be profitable.

> **"The *Centipede* ripoff is called *Bug Blaster.* It has no trackball, no rapid fire, and just one fire button."**

On another note, let's say someone bought Bruce's album and copied it—but instead of using tape, he pressed a bootleg record. How would you feel about buying a fake for eight or ten bucks? It's not first quality and certainly doesn't sound as good as your friend's copy. Now you're unhappy, and Bruce has missed out again. Legitimate video game makers face a similar problem.

According to industry spokespeople, fifteen to twenty percent of a game's cost goes back into research and development. R and D, as it is called, is the process of designing new games. Pirates don't invest in new ideas—they steal them. Their profits go into their pockets and stay there. Unless pirates are stopped, companies such as Midway, Atari, Sega, Williams and Nintendo may not have the money to develop tomorrow's games—the games you'll want to play. ☐

HOW TO SPOT A RIPOFF

Bootlegs are mainly placed well off the beaten path—a corner store, highway rest-stop or any other place an FBI agent wouldn't readily check out. But don't be surprised to find one in your local arcade. Some copies are so good even the game room owner may have been fooled. Here's what to look for:

1. The manufacturer's emblem somewhere on the machine. It can be found on the control panel, the screen or the marquee (the part of the machine that sticks out over the screen.) If you don't see one, watch the attract mode (when the game is playing itself). Most games have the maker's name displayed on the bottom of the screen, along with a copyright date.
2. Check out the name of the game and the cabinet artwork. If the name is misspelled or changed to sound like the original title (**Pac-Man** to **Pack-Man**) it's probably a copy. The cabinets of most ripoffs are one color with little or no artwork. Lately I've noticed quite a few covered with wood-grain contact paper.
3. Game instructions, usually printed right on the screen. If they're missing or otherwise jumbled up, chances are the game was copied. Certain machines manufactured entirely overseas carry two sets—one in the native tongue, the other in terribly translated English.
4. The control panel can be a dead giveaway in most cases. Most bootleg games have been converted more than once. Thus many holes have to be drilled to accomodate the different joysticks and buttons necessary for various games. Look for open holes on the control panel.

Here are names of some copies:

Defender: Mayday, Defense Command, Depender, Defenders, Mutant Attack, Baiter Attack, Humanoid Rescue

Pac-Man: Pack-Man, Puck-Man, Speedy, Cruiser, Gobbler, New Puc, Pak-Man, Pirahna, Cruncher, Bucaneer, Barracuda, Mighty Mouth, Pop Man, Eager Eater, Munch Man

Centipede: Bug Blaster, Worm War, Buggy, Centipedes, Bug Attack

Ms. Pac-Man: Mrs. Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-10, Pac-3, Pac-4

Donkey Kong: Crazy Kong, Congorilla, King Kong

Frogger: Frog, Hopperty, Frogs

Clue #5: Don't touch the Sizzloids

Magic Alex

Alex Leavens designed *Gorf*, *Crazy Climber*, and *Stargunner*. He also levitates his wife. **By Dan Gutman**

VGP: You're probably the only video game designer who also does magic.

AL: Actually, I know at least two other designers who do magic. There seems to be some creative link between the two professions. I think it's a need to blow people's minds. A magician wants to pull you into his little reality, do something impossible, and leave you amazed. A designer wants to do the same thing.

VGP: What kind of tricks do you do?

AL: Mostly sleight-of-hand tricks—card tricks, coin tricks. I started when I saw Doug Henning in *The Magic Show* when I was 12. The trick in the photo is when I levitate a test tube and make the cork pop out into your hand. You can be standing two feet away, and you won't be able to figure out how I do it.

VGP: So how do you do it?

AL: I'm not *telling*!

VGP: Then how about telling us about your latest games?

AL: Sure. I've got two coming out. *The Impossible Game* is an Atari VCS game by Telesys, who I designed *Stargunner* for. It's a puzzle game, sort of like Rubik's Cube. You don't blow anything up and nobody gets hurt—it's strictly a mental challenge.

VGP: How did it come about?

AL: They called me and said, "Design a puzzle game. We'll call it '*The Impossible Game*.' "

VGP: Is it impossible?

AL: Just about. If you take the number eight and raise it to the 21st power, that is the total possible number of moves in the game. Out of all that, there is just *one* correct path.

VGP: Has anybody solved it yet?

AL: No, but if you do, something very spectacular happens, both visually and auditorally.

VGP: What is it?

AL: I'm not *telling*!

VGP: Then tell us about the other game.

AL: That's *Soap Suds*, another VCS game by First Star Software. It's kind of *Q*-Bert*esque. You run around a rectangular grid while this big soap bubble is chasing you.

VGP: How close is it to *Q*Bert*?

AL: It's the same *type* of game, it's not the same game. Just like *Pac-Man* opened up the field of maze games, the people who designed *Q*Bert* opened up a new area of game play—attempting to change things while being hunted. Actually, *Soap Suds* started out as *The Emphysema Game*—you were a pair of lungs trying to avoid a heart attack. A lot of people liked that idea, but a lot were grossed out by it too.

VGP: You seem to like oddball games.

AL: Yeah. *Gorf* and *Stargunner* were both real adrenaline games. Basically you could pick them up and flail on them—just shoot everything in sight. On games like those, you've got to disconnect your synapses and just make a straight linkup between your eyes and your hands—take your brain entirely out of the circuit, you know? You have to make yourself into a reflex machine. The same goes for a game like *Kaboom*, by Activision. But every once in a while you want to work on an off-the-wall, goofball game. I've done three of them—*Crazy Climber*, *Kickman*, and *Bouncing Baby Monkeys*.

VGP: Tell us about them.

AL: Well, two of them may never exist. I

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN HARDING

ALEX LEAVENS
STARGUNNER

designed *Kickman* for Midway a few years ago when they were thinking of entering the home game market. (*Ed. note: A version of* Kickman *is coming from CBS Electronics*). *Bouncing Baby Monkeys* was based on an old Bugs Bunny cartoon. It's about this drunken stork that delivers Bugs to a gorilla family, thinking he is their baby.

VGP: Take *Pitfall*, a game that is known for its graphics. If they were to take away some of the graphics, what could they have added to the game play?

AL: Well, this is second guessing, but if I'd sacrificed some of the graphics I could have, let's see, maybe put in animals instead of just rolling barrels. Maybe you'd be able to go up the trees. It's hard to say. But I'd say *Pitfall* is a good balance between graphics and game play.

VGP: You design games for several companies. Do they ever ask you to change the graphics or game play of a game?

AL: Sure. I was asked to put additional character sets into *Stargunner.* That was an intelligent choice. Sometimes a designer is too close to the game to see what should be improved.

VGP: What did you have originally?

AL: I just had the flying saucers and I was flat out of memory. I was at 4K, totally jammed, and they asked for two more character sets. I went, "*Ohhhhhhh!*"

"I called it The Emphysema Game. You were a lung trying to avoid a heart attack."

VGP: How did you squeeze them in?

AL: I used a sledgehammer. I code compressed. There are literally hundreds of ways of finding a byte or two bytes. You see, when you start working on the game you don't always consider total efficiency. Then you get to the end and you're scrambling around for a couple of bytes. You can usually go back through your old code and kind of bludgeon it—bludgeon out an extra ten or twenty bytes. I managed to get 110 bytes out of *Stargunner*, so I could fit the other character sets in.

VGP: And that really improved the game. Have you ever received any stupid requests from companies?

AL: Oh, sure. There was this one company who shall remain nameless that asked me to design a maze game for them. I said okay, sure, and I went away and programmed it. I came back and they looked at it and said, "Oh, no, no, no. We wanted narrower pathways and we wanted power pills and..." All they wanted was someone to give them a *Pac-Man* ripoff.

VGP: Alex, have we pushed the Atari VCS as far as it can go?

AL: I don't think so. There are a lot of programmers who are under the impression that you can only support so many objects on a scan line because you only have so many cycles to draw something on the TV. I agreed with that thinking, but recently I've worked out a way of supporting more objects that I thought possible.

VGP: How do you do that?

AL: Well, I don't want to talk about it a whole lot, but it's strictly a programming trick, a way of writing code most efficiently that will fit into the given time you have to draw a scan line. You have 76 cycles and this is a fixed constant. You can't do anything about the time, so what you have to do is compress your code. I've discovered a way of making it do more than one thing at a time and have those

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

Clue #4: Roaming Eyes and Zipper Rippers

VIDEO GAMES PLAYER

THE HOTLINE

Up-to-the-minute gaming news

.....NEW YORK-LONDON-PARIS-OTTUMWA.....

This fall, COLECO will announce a NATIONAL VIDEO GAME CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITION with playoffs to be held in NEW YORK CITY. They are also starting a new club, THE COLECOVISION VIDEO CLUB. For more info, write to them at: P.O. Box 4025, Syosset, NY 11791. Meanwhile, the company has been sued by another computer company that claims it owns the name ADAM. Games for the computer, by the way, will contain up to 500,000 bytes of information--125 TIMES more than games for the Atari VCS...

ATARI is starting to fight back and has been called "THE COLECO OF 1983." They are about to unveil four new computers to replace the 400/800/1200 line, and for $465, you can get the 600XL, printer, and disk drive--$135 cheaper than ADAM! Other ATARI news--They have licensed Nintendo's MARIO BROTHERS for home video games and computer games. XEVIOUS, "the game you can't play at home," will soon be available for the 5200, as will TEMPEST, ROBOTRON, PENGO, JOUST, POLE POSITION, DIG DUG, and BATTLEZONE. We've seen the last four, and they look terrific. Atari VCS and 5200 owners will soon have speech synthesis modules, to be manufactured by MILTON BRADLEY, along with 18 voice carts over three years. Atari Atari purchased 150,000 TELEPHONE CHASIS in Singapore and contracted PORSCHE to design the housings of their ATARITEL telephones. Nolan Bushnell, the man who started Atari and was SUED by them recently, has licensed his future arcade games to Atari. Call 800-847-4404 if you want to get the solution to RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. Call 800-842-1225 to get service for your COLECOVISION...

LASERDISCS are coming! RCA has given the technical specifications for their interactive videodisc system to game designers. Atari, Coleco, Mattel, and others are rushing to be the first with laserdisc games. DRAGON'S LAIR, though primitive, has started the flood. We can expect ENVIRONMENTAL games shortly--games in which you step into a booth and actually become a part of the action. SIMUTRON already has a test "Tournament Center" in San Diego, where 16 players can play at once...

QUICKIES: A company called VIDCO will release a $59.95 "Copy Cart"--a device that can transfer a VCS game onto a blank cartridge in TWO SECONDS...Two companies, INTEC and ESAC, are coming out with systems to replace quarters with credit-card-type devices in arcades...PARKER BROTHERS has licensed GYRUS, and will be making Q*BERT for VCS, ColecoVision, VIC-20, and Commodore 64...AMIGA has dumped its POWER MODULE (it was basically the same as the STARPATH SUPERCHARGER), but will be making their JOYBOARD for Atari 400/800 and VIC-20. They will also be coming out with VCS carts that contain THREE SEPARATE GAMES...E.T. fans have a fan club. Write to them at: P.O. Box E.T., Mt. Morris, IL 61054... ELECTRONIC ARTS has hired JULIUS "DR. J." ERVING and LARRY BIRD to help develop a computer basketball game...IMAGIC is about to release BEEZER, their first arcade game. They have also changed the names of some upcoming games: TARANTULA becomes LASER GATES, HOP TO IT becomes QUICK STEP, FLAP becomes WING WAR...

RETURN OF THE JEDI used to be called REVENGE OF THE JEDI, so if you have any posters or buttons with the old title, they are worth a lot of money...TIM SKELLY, who designed REACTOR for GOTTLIEB, is working on a new game called INSECTOR...SENTE'S first game will be GRIDLEE...Coleco's JOHN DYKSTRA will be doing the special effects for the movie DUNE...There is a new video game newsletter called CLUBHOUSE. For info, write George Perry at: 104 Millstone Circle, Courtland, VA 23837...Tokyo District Court has finally decided that video games should be copyrighted like books, as they are in the U.S. This should slow down THE VIDEO GAME PIRATES...Also, 15 Japanese companies and SPECTRAVIDEO in the U.S. have gotten together to make programs for all their computers compatible...Our next issue will be SLIGHTLY different. Call THE HOTLINE for details...

CALL THE VIDEO GAME HOTLINE (212) 581-8267

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

puter and can print 80 characters per second, and up to 40 columns wide. There is also a "4-Color Printer" for those that need 80 columns. The Aquarius Modem will connect you with Aquarius Home Services (such as *Hints From Heloise*) and CompuServe. The Aquarius Master Expansion Module is a double disk drive that will be available in early 1984. There is also a Data Recorder, Aquarius Memory Cartridges, Aquarius Mini Expander (to play games), and the Command Console, which will be able to turn appliances on and off in your home automatically. It will, for example, start dad's coffee before he wakes up, turn on the sprinklers, and turn the lights on when nobody's home.

The software for Aquarius includes games (**BurgerTime, Bump 'N' Jump, Night Stalker**), education (**LOGO, Match & Learn, Math & Mazes**), home applications (**Menu Planner, Tax Tips, FileForm**), and self-improvement (**Diet Trac, Biorhythms, Typemaster**).

Intellivision . . . Four?

Even with computer enhancements, the days of this "second generation" Intellivision game system are numbered. So what's next? Behind the guarded doors of Mattel's exhibit at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, we were ushered into an almost completely dark room and allowed a peek at what was then called "Intellivision III." This is the same time Intellivision II was unveiled, by the way. Intellivision III, we were told, would have higher resolution (320 × 192) than the Atari 5200 and ColecoVision. It would be able to have 64 independently moving objects on the screen at once. It would have a built-in voice, stereo output jacks, wireless controllers with real joysticks, not the much-maligned Intellivision disc. It would be compatible with the first two Intellivisions, the System Changer, the Computer Adaptor, and the Music Synthesizer. It would have a 16-bit microprocessor instead of the 8-bit one found in the 5200 and ColecoVision. To put it plainly, it was pretty neat, and all the video game magazines rushed out "previews" of the new system.

Well, Intellivision III has been scrapped. Mattel claims they have come up with a new graphics system—Super-Graphics—that allows them to program games for the Intellivision II that are just as spectacular as anything Intellivision III would have been able to display. Super-Graphics (official name "Mattel Electronics Graphic Development System GDS-7809") produces multiple game screens, animated title screens, and generally better-looking screens for games like **BurgerTime, Pinball,** and **Masters of the Universe.** According to Mattel, Intellivision III became unnecessary.

However, according to a source at the company, Mattel is busily at work, in another dark room somewhere, creating the next Intellivision, which will be available sometime in 1984. Intellivision IV? Maybe. A laserdisc game system? That's a rumor.

One thing is certain—with Intellivision, M Network, Aquarius II, The Entertainment Computer System, and arcade licensed games, Mattel is fighting back . . . hard. ☐

Suggested retail price of items mentioned in this article—Intellivision II: $150, System Changer: $80, Computer Adaptor and Keyboard: $100, Music Synthesizer: $80, Aquarius: $100-$150, 4K Memory: $50, 16K Memory: $100, 40-column printer: $165, 80-column printer; $225, Data Recorder: $50, Modem: $90, Command Console: $90. For $430, the Aquarius, Mini-Expander, Data Recorder, and printer are sold in package called COM/PAC.

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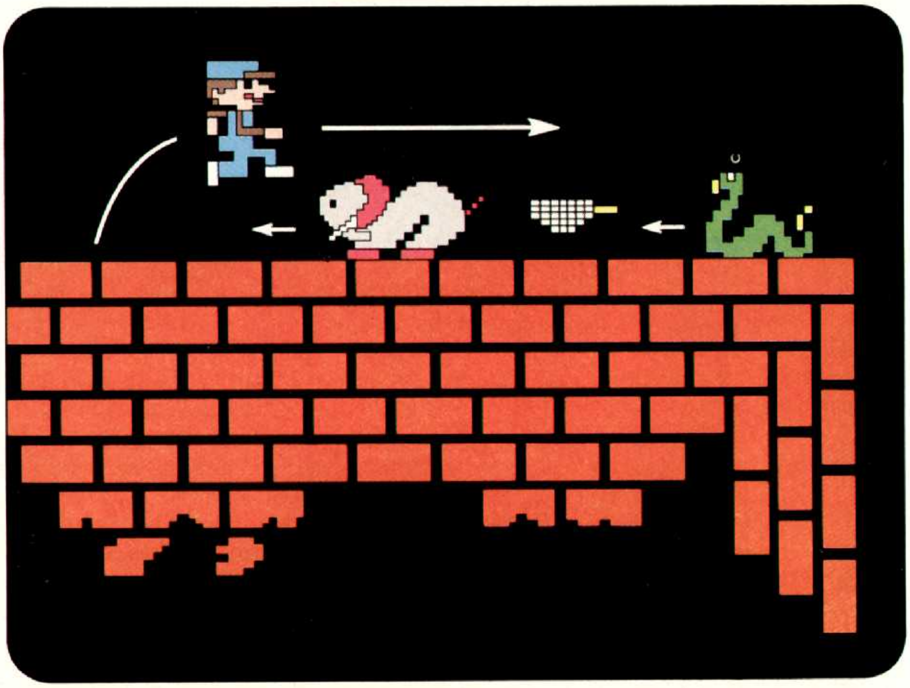
Let's see how *you* respond when the pressure is on. Here is a life and death situation. Your very existence is in peril. Can you survive?

ZOO KEEPER



THE CRISIS . . .

Zeke is in trouble. Two animals are streaking toward him on the top side of the rectangle. The net would stop them, but if he jumps for the net, he'll land right on the far animal. Short of running away, how can he capture these animals?

YOUR SOLUTION . . .

It is a little-known fact that if you jiggle the joystick back and forth in the middle of a leap, Zeke will hover in mid-air like a hummingbird. Try this tactic next time you're in a tight spot like this—it's not easy, but with practice you can land right on the net.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NINA WALLACE

BEAT IT! MS. PAC-MAN

By Bob Guerra

Atari's VCS version of *Ms. Pac-Man* includes nearly all the elements that made its coin-op counterpart the most successful sequel game to date. Everything from the catchy opening theme to bouncing fruit and pretzels is intact. But game-play is the main attraction.

Instead of one maze to chomp your way through, there are four. Each has its own tunnel locations and dangerous passages where inexperienced gobblers can easily become surrounded and trapped. Six types of fruit and a pretzel randomly appear throughout the game and are worth up to 5000 bonus points. Inky, Pinky, Blinky and Sue are all here, each distinguished by color as well as speed.

After clearing a maze completely of dots, you get a new maze to clear. Mazes one–four must be cleared twice each before moving on to the next maze. Following the fourth maze, you will alternate between mazes three and four for the rest of the game.

> **''Don't wait by the power pills. Follow a ghost as he runs over the pill. Then eat him without even reversing direction.''**

SCORING

Each maze contains about 150 dots that are worth 10 points apiece. There are also four energy pills in every maze, worth 50 points each.

The first ghost Ms. Pac-Man consumes after eating an energy pill is worth 200 points, 400 for the second, 800 for the third and 1600 for the fourth. All four ghosts must be gobbled on a single energy pill to win the total 3000 points.

Bonus points for eating fruit and pretzels are awarded as follows:

CHERRY	**100**	**APPLE**	**1000**
ORANGE	**500**	**PEAR**	**2000**
PRETZEL	**700**	**BANANA**	**5000**

MAZE ONE

Because the wall sections are relatively short in the first maze, it is difficult to become trapped in one section if you keep moving. The two escape tunnels (located about halfway up the left and right sides of the maze) also help Ms. Pac-Man avoid dangerous situations by allowing her to exit at one side of the screen, and reappear at the other.

When play first begins, do nothing. Ms. Pac-Man will automatically move to the left. As this happens, watch the red ghost (fastest of the four) that begins the game already out of the central reincarnation box. If he goes right, begin clearing out the bottom left corner of the maze, but leave the energy pill until it's really needed.

Gradually work your way over to the right side, using any pattern that clears a lot of the center in a continuous chomping of dots. Always be prepared to escape up through the center of the maze if the ghosts close in. If the red ghost begins by moving left, head right via a quicker, more direct route.

Try to keep track of how many dots you've eaten. When this number approaches 50, head directly for one of the escape tunnels on the right side of the maze. Upon eating your 50th dot, your first fruit—cherries—will enter the screen through one of the escape tunnels. If it enters at the right, you'll be in great position to pounce on it. If it enters at the left, Simply wrap through the nearest tunnel and do the same. Don't worry if you don't eat the cherries right away. They will bounce around the screen for up to 25 seconds before exiting through another escape tunnel.

Now that you've cleared out most of the lower half of the screen, eat the first energy pill. Carefully work your way up to one of the energy pills at the top of the screen and wait beside it until one or more of the ghosts are very close. When you eat the pill, you get eight seconds to chase and eat the ghosts.

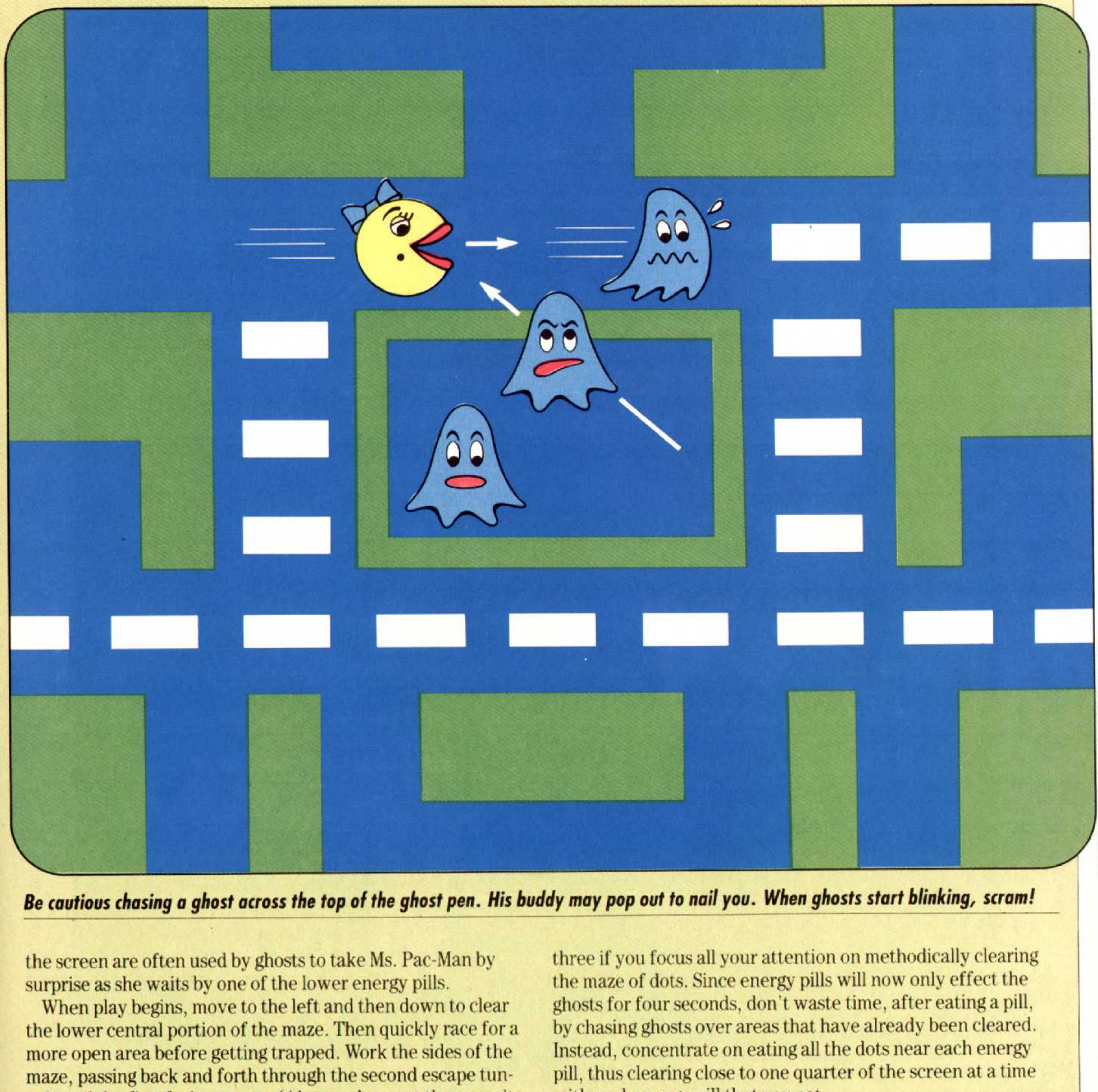
After turning blue, the ghosts frequently head for the corners. As you chase them, be careful not to inadvertently run over a second energy pill. This will begin the cycle all over again and you will lose the bonus you would have received for eating all four ghosts on the first pill. Avoid chasing any ghosts past the top of the reincarnation box once you've already eaten one or two. They may try to reenter the game as you're passing directly above, and you will lose a game life.

A second pair of cherries appears after the 100th dot has been eaten. When it does, eat a second energy dot (provided there is at least one ghost very close by). They try to get all four ghosts and the cherries before the effects of the energy pill wear off, or the cherries disappear.

Be sure, as you're finishing off the rest of this screen, to save at least one dot until after you've eaten your fourth energy pill and the ghosts it entitles you to. When this screen is completed, it will be repeated (this time with strawberries). But the ghosts will be quicker and you'll have to be even more careful to avoid getting caught without a means of escape. Otherwise, the basic strategies should work just fine.

MAZE TWO

Although there are four fewer dots to eat in this maze, it's harder to clear for three reasons: ghosts move quicker; their vulnerability, after an energy pill is consumed, lasts only six seconds; and the escape tunnels at the bottom left and right of



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NINA WALLACE

Be cautious chasing a ghost across the top of the ghost pen. His buddy may pop out to nail you. When ghosts start blinking, scram!

the screen are often used by ghosts to take Ms. Pac-Man by surprise as she waits by one of the lower energy pills.

When play begins, move to the left and then down to clear the lower central portion of the maze. Then quickly race for a more open area before getting trapped. Work the sides of the maze, passing back and forth through the second escape tunnel until the first fruit appears. (Always glance at the opposite side of the screen before going through a tunnel, to avoid running into a ghost upon your arrival on the other side.)

When possible, clear the long top row of dots while luring as many ghosts as you can toward one of the waiting energy pills. As you chase the ghosts, try to clear at least a portion of the confined central section of dots directly below the top row. Although the energy pills don't last as long, never give up the chase until the ghosts have blinked twice.

MAZE THREE

If you make it through the second maze twice and still have a Ms. Pac-Man or two to spare, you should do well on maze three if you focus all your attention on methodically clearing the maze of dots. Since energy pills will now only effect the ghosts for four seconds, don't waste time, after eating a pill, by chasing ghosts over areas that have already been cleared. Instead, concentrate on eating all the dots near each energy pill, thus clearing close to one quarter of the screen at a time with each energy pill that you eat.

Try to clear the central portion of the screen a little at a time (in short passes) as you move from one energy pill area to the next. Eat all the apples and pears you can, since getting all four fruits on these screens increases your score by 6000 points.

While you could easily shake a pursuing ghost in the earlier rounds by taking a lot of quick corners, this tactic no longer works very well. The fastest, most persistent of the four ghosts is the red one, so take every precaution to avoid a hot chase by this character. If there is a ghost on your tail, head for the nearest energy pill. If none is available, an escape tunnel (there is only one in this maze) may do the trick.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

BEAT IT!
SINISTAR

While most gamers get a kick out of blowing away swarms of small aliens like those in *Galaga*, nothing can compare with the sheer pleasure of annihilating this latest menace from Williams. It's much easier said than done.

To begin with, it takes thirteen hits with "sinibombs" to kill Sinistar. You begin the game with none. To load your ship with sinibombs, you mine crystals from floating planetoids. This is accomplished by rapidly shooting the planetoids until they give up the small, glowing crystals.

You pick them up by flying over them. Red "worker" aliens compete with you for the crystals, picking up the ones you fail to reach in time and using them to build the Sinistar. Deadly warriors (laser-firing tanks) also fly onto the screen and disintegrate your ship before you can blink.

SCORING

Points are awarded as follows:

PLANETOIDS	**5**
WORKERS	**150**
CRYSTALS	**200**
WARRIORS	**500**
SINISTAR PIECES	**500**
DESTROYING SINISTAR	**15,000**

STRATEGIES

Be quick. Pick up each crystal before the workers get to it. Fly circles around warriors and blast them before their gun turrets swing your way. Get your ship loaded with sinibombs before the workers can complete their little project.

As the game begins, you will find your ship on a planetoidless screen. Fly in any direction until you reach a planetoid. The most efficient method for mining crystals is to position your ship as close to the planetoid as possible and to hold the fire button down. At first your shots will have no effect. Soon, though, small crystals will begin to come out. Do not stop firing. Fly your ship over them while continuously zapping the quivering planetoid. When a planetoid is out of crystals, it will explode and you'll have to move on to a new planetoid. Most planetoids are good for a half dozen crystals.

> **"Sinistar is made of 13 pieces. If you drop a full load of sinibombs, only 65% have to find their target to destroy him."**

Workers are harmless, but they will pounce on any loose crystals. Blast a departing worker before it exits with the stolen crystal. The crystal should then be removed before a second worker comes along to snatch it up. If the crystal goes flying into space, don't bother chasing it.

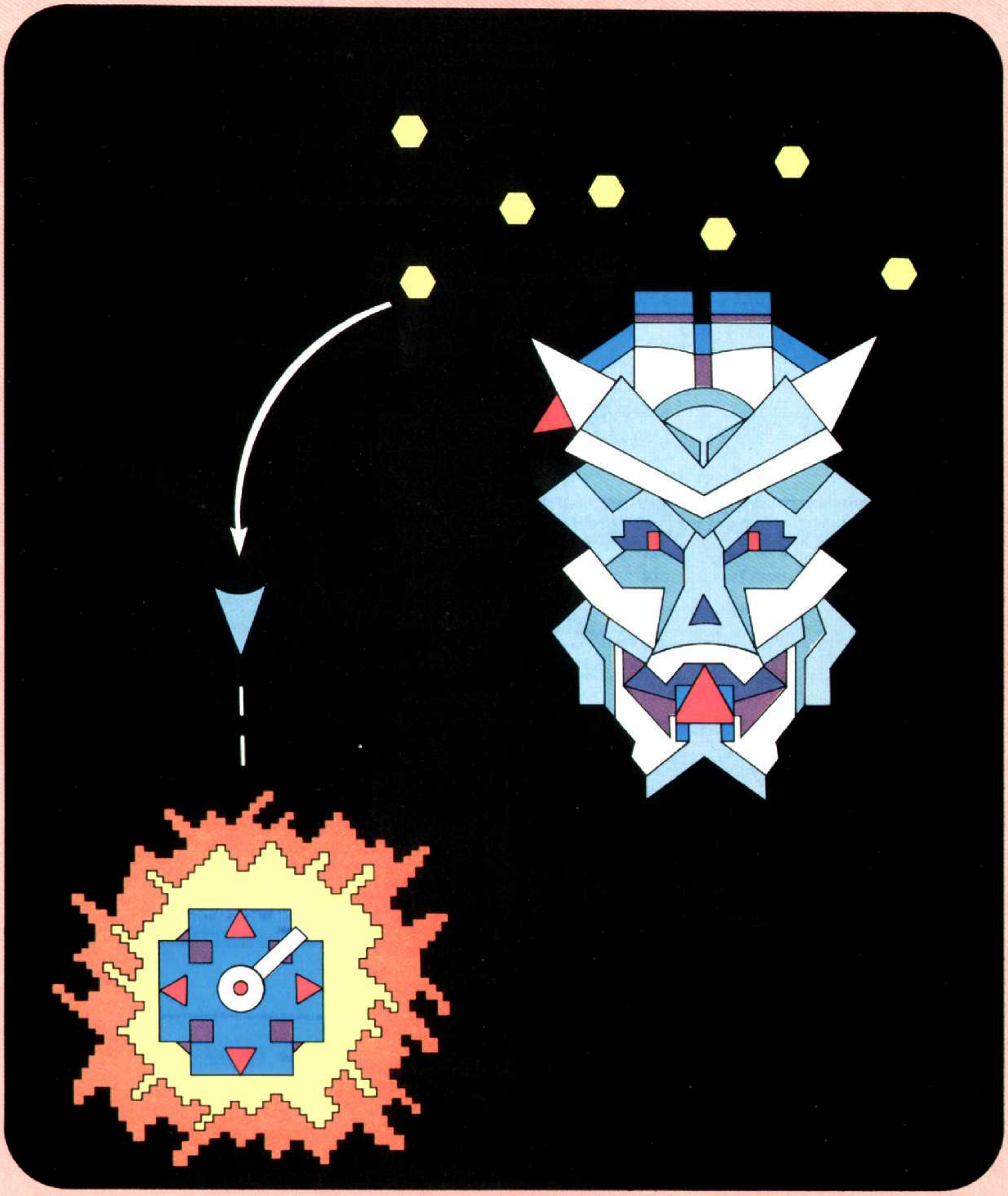
Keep your ears open for a high-pitched whistle signalling the warriors' impending arrival. The instant a warrior flies onto the screen, shoot it before it shoots you. Watch the direction of the gun turrets. During the early stages you can avoid the warriors' lasers by hiding behind a large planetoid while continuing to mine its crystals.

You should have a full load (twenty) of sinibombs before the workers finish building the Sinistar. One way to tell if you have a full load without having to look up at the top of the screen is by listening for a change in the sound made when you pick up a crystal. Although the workers need twenty crystals to build Sinistar, the completed villain is composed of only thirteen pieces. Therefore, if you unleash a full load on him, only 65% of them will have to find their target to destroy Sinistar.

HOW TO KILL SINISTAR

When Sinistar is completed, it will announce its entry with a loud, "I live!" Check the radar screen to see if Sinistar's in scanner range. It will appear as a yellow blip outside the central box which represents the screen itself. Your ship will be a second yellow blip. If you spot Sinistar on the radar screen, or if it begins to shout, "Run coward, run!" unload some of those sinibombs. DON'T WAIT FOR SINISTAR TO APPEAR BEFORE FIRING SINIBOMBS!

Release half of your bombs by tapping the bomb button with your second or third finger while continuing to hold down the regular fire button with your index finger. This will make it easier to defend yourself against warriors which will be harrassing you throughout. The bombs that find their way to Sinistar will slow him down. This gives you a chance to replenish your supply of sinibombs through continued mining. Keep one eye on the radar, though, so you'll be able to sidestep Sinistar when he *does* arrive on the screen.



As you circle Sinistar and drop bombs, keep firing at the warriors. Drop the minimum number of bombs you need to kill Sinistar.

Onceyou'vemanaged to replenish most of the bombs fired at Sinistar in the initial foray, it is not too difficult to finish him off. If Sinistar *does* appear on screen and is closing in fast, circle him as you release the sinibombs. Watch him die.

It is at this point that you can greatly increase your chances of success in the second or "worker" zone. By firing *only the exact number of sinibombs* needed to destroy Sinistar, you will be able to bring as many as eight or nine unused bombs with you as you warp to the new zone. You'll need them. Because the number and speed of your enemies increases with every new zone you enter, you will have to spend more of your time defending your ship and less time gathering crystals. Therefore, any bombs you can bring with you will save you valuable time and help to increase your score.

Finally, never lose your last ship with half a load of sinibombs on board. If you see that you have only one ship remaining and it's a long way off until your next bonus ship, unleash your bombs. Many will hit the unfinished Sinistar, delaying its completion, and giving you more time to mine a few crystals. Now *play*, coward!

**MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
120,000**

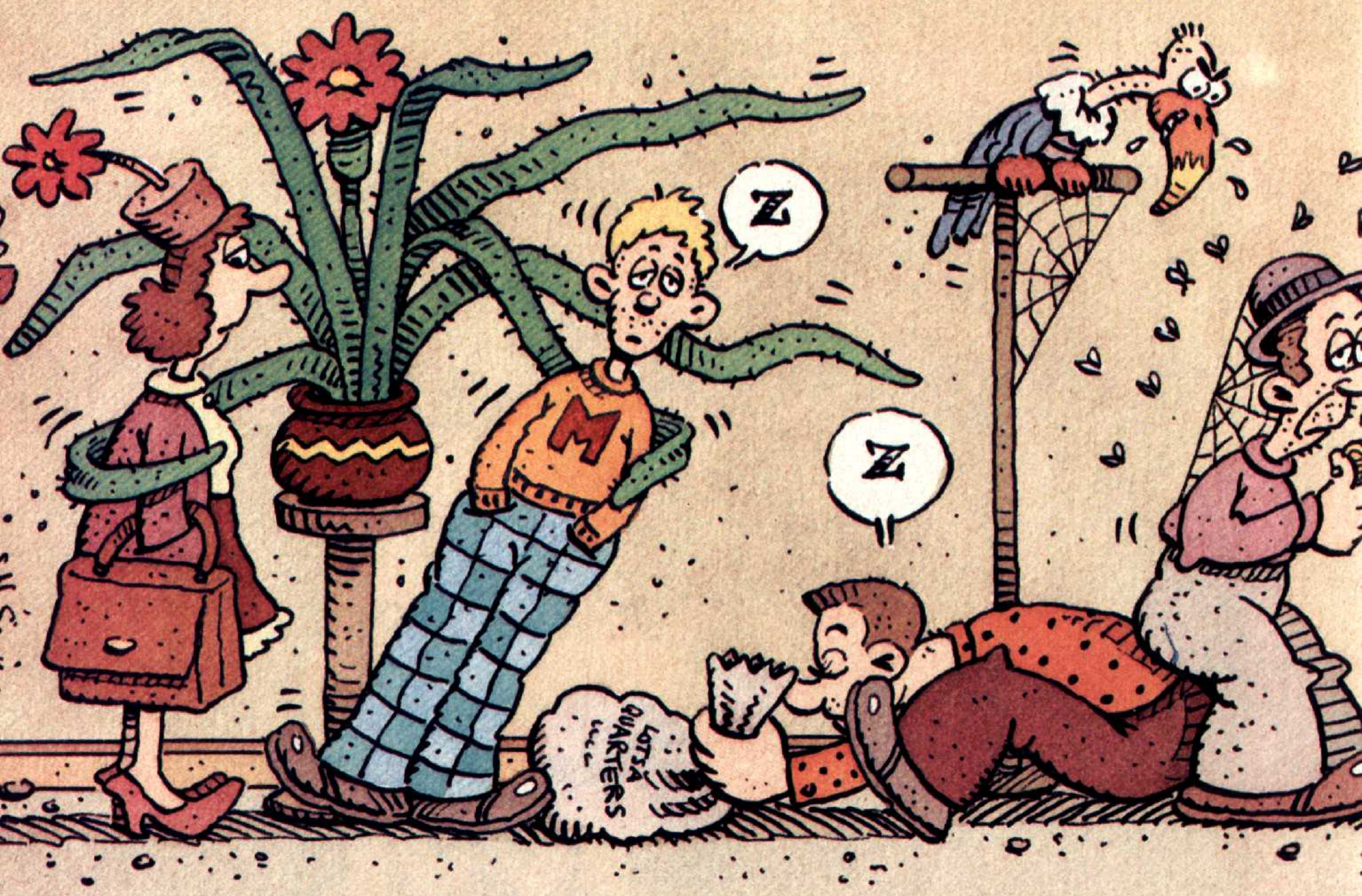


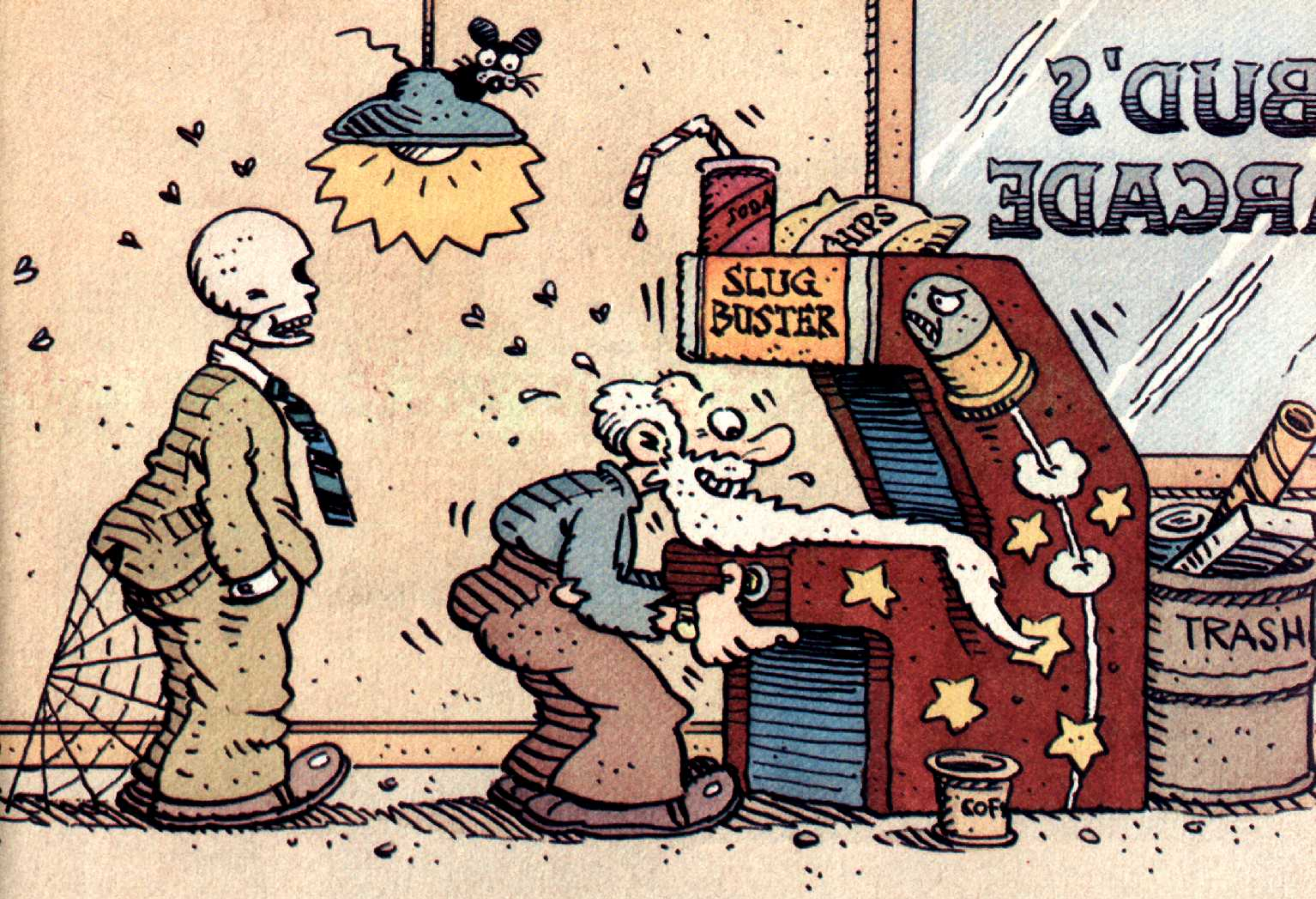
ILLUSTRATION BY ELWOOD SMITH

Secret Tricks!

How To Play Forever

Leo Daniels has the highest score in the world on Asteroids**—40,101,910 points. He holds the world record for** Millipede **(1,747,891),** Asteroids Deluxe **(2,269,230),** Food Fight **(3,327,000),** Journey **(89,000) and his high score on** Robotron **is more than 169 *million* points! Leo Daniels is a man who has played for 36 consecutive hours on a single quarter. The man is awesome.**

As vice-president of Light Years Amusement in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, Leo has discovered a number of simple tricks and techniques that enable him to score *millions* of points and win as many as *99* free games. Now, for the first time in print, Leo tells you his secret tips.



Win 40 free games on Tempest! Score 200 million points at Joust!

Donkey Kong Jr.

THE TRICK: How to get unlimited lives
HOW IT'S DONE: You must play two players. Play the first player normally until you die. When the second player starts, move Jr. to the far right side of the starting platform with one foot completely off the edge. (You must be able to jump straight up without grabbing the vine.) Wait until a blue trap comes down the apple vine. When it reaches the bottom, jump! You must hit the water the same time the trap does. The screen will go blank, then read, "PLAYER ONE." Now player one will have his same score and same amount of men, but he will have returned to level one.

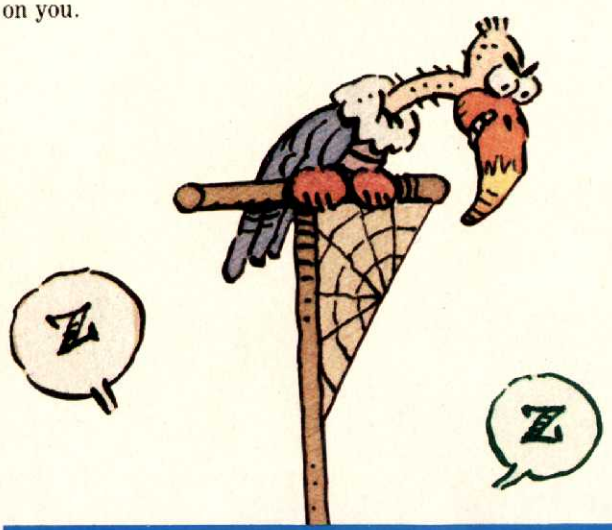
THE TRICK: How to get seven men
HOW IT'S DONE: You must play two players. Lose all of your Jrs. on the first player on purpose. On your last Jr. on player two, jump into the water at the same time the blue trap falls. The screen will read "GAME OVER PLAYER ONE," but player one will come back to life with seven Jrs.

Space Invaders DeLuxe

THE TRICK: 1000 point "rainbow" bonus
HOW IT'S DONE: Leave the far left row of invaders alone. As the aliens walk across the screen, the top invader is one step ahead of the others. Move slightly ahead of the others. Move slightly ahead of the entire row and shoot them out from the top to the bottom. This is difficult, but you can do it. When you shoot the last one, the bottom alien in the left row, there will be a rainbow and you will be awarded 1000 points.

Galaga

THE TRICK: Make all the creatures stop firing at you for the entire game
HOW IT'S DONE: On the first screen, shoot all the aliens except for the bumblebee on the bottom left side. For the next 15 minutes, let it fly around you and dodge all the shots. After 15 minutes it will stop firing altogether. Let it pass by four times and then shoot it. For the rest of the game, no enemies will fire on you.



Stargate

THE TRICK: 2,000 point "Zowie" bonus
HOW IT'S DONE: Shoot everything on the screen except for one lander. Follow that lander until he picks up a humanoid. As the lander flies to the top of the screen, shoot him and let the humanoid fall. You must catch the humanoid at the exact instant he is touching the ground. If you get it right, the screen will black out for a second and reappear with a burst of colors and other decorations commemorating your success.

Jack the Giant Killer

THE TRICK: Win 99 free games
HOW IT'S DONE: Simply jump on Jack's house and keep on jumping until you die. On your next game, 99 free games will appear.

Tempest

THE TRICK: Win 40 free games
HOW IT'S DONE: You must first reach level 27. Then let all your men die and insert *two* quarters in the machine. Now start your game at level 26 and work your way to level 27 again. When you get to 27, get the last two digits of your score to 11, then lose all your men on purpose again. Enter your initials as quickly as possible and don't touch anything else. When the high scores disappear and it spells out "*Tempest*," 40 free games will click up.

Asteroids

THE TRICK: Make the rocks pass right through you
HOW IT'S DONE: Sit on the lower left corner of the screen, as far in the corner as you can get without disappearing. Rotate and fire. The rocks will pass through you and bullets won't touch you.

Millipede

THE TRICK: Get 795,000 bonus points
HOW IT'S DONE: This one's for pros only. When your score reaches 1,080,000, spin the trac-ball. You will be able to pick a bonus of anywhere from 15,000 to 795,000 points.

Robotron

THE TRICK: Make tanks stop shooting fireballs
HOW IT'S DONE: On any wave that has tanks, shoot everything but one tank. Let this lone tank shoot 21 times. It will then shoot one last shot and wind down. It will bob up and down and stop firing. This is good to know if you want to take a break during a marathon game.

Joust

THE TRICK: Score over 200 million points
HOW IT'S DONE: On wave six, joust all the knights except one. Let this one get caught by the lava troll. Now position yourself on the bottom floating rock or platform. The Teridactyles will start coming out. Simply face the direction they come from and they will run into your joust every time. You can build up over 1000 extra men.

Ms. Pac-Man

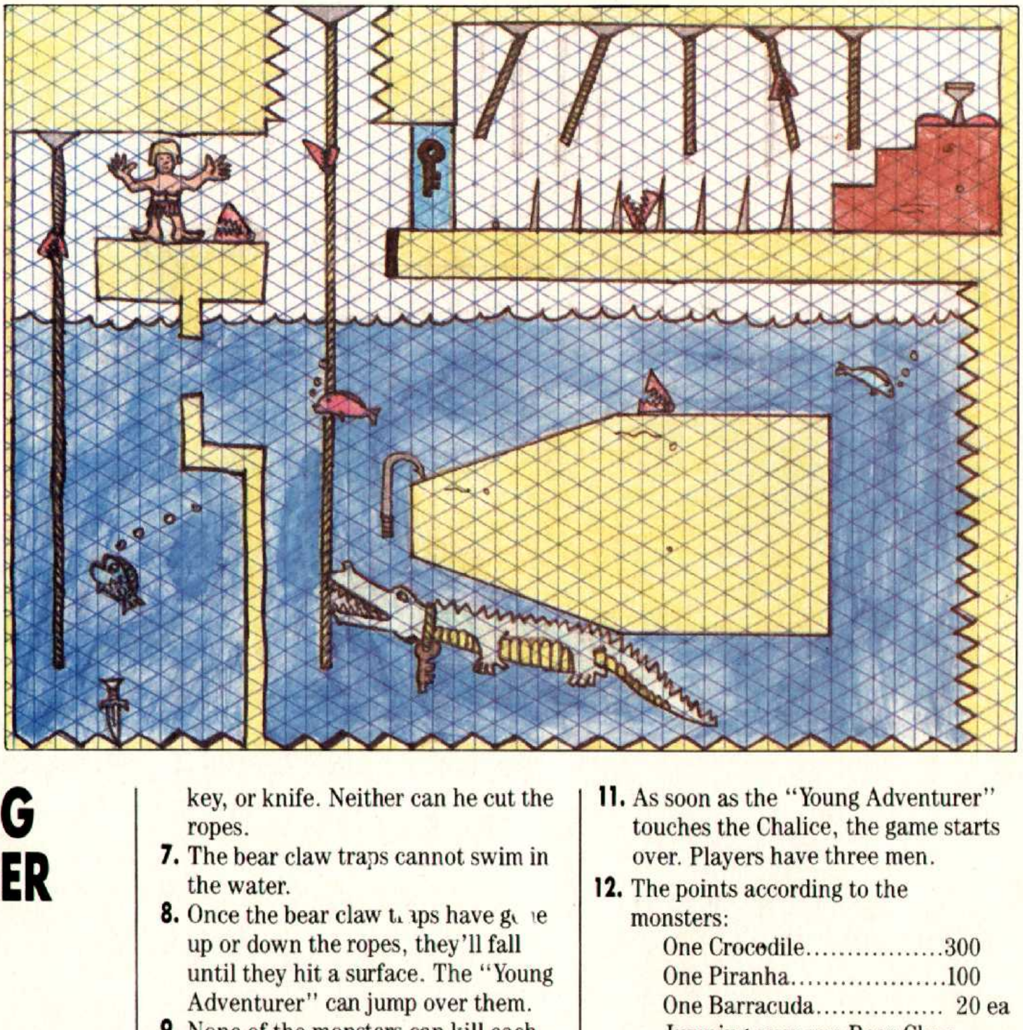
THE TRICK: Win 64 free games
HOW IT'S DONE: You must be able to complete the 137th board. Beware! This board is different from any other. All the characters will be right side up, but the board will be upside down. However, the dots will all be in the right places. Once you've cleared this board, 75% of the time, the machine will click up 64 free games and give you a borderless maze of dots.

Note to all players: Some machines have been reprogrammed to prevent these tricks. The tips for ***Tempest, Joust, Asteroids*** *and* ***Jack the Giant Killer*** *may not work on modified games.*

GAMES FROM OUR READERS

THE YOUNG ADVENTURER

Shawn Lysowski is 13 years old and a 9th grader who lives in Desert Hot Springs, California. Shawn loves to invent games and plays Front Line, Q*Bert, and Popeye as much as he can. He also likes swimming and baseball.



THE YOUNG ADVENTURER

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To touch the Holy Chalice.

RULES OF THE GAME

1. The "Young Adventurer" represents the player in the game.

2. The "Young Adventurer" can move up or down ropes, jump and walk on flat surfaces.

3. To kill the Barracudas and Piranhas, the "Young Adventurer" has to get the knife. The hook will not work on them.

4. The hook is to kill the Crocodile. The "Young Adventurer" has to hit the Crocodile eight times before it is killed, then must retrieve the key.

5. The key is to open the door where the Chalice is kept.

6. The "Young Adventurer" cannot kill the bear claw traps with the hook, key, or knife. Neither can he cut the ropes.

7. The bear claw traps cannot swim in the water.

8. Once the bear claw traps have gone up or down the ropes, they'll fall until they hit a surface. The "Young Adventurer" can jump over them.

9. None of the monsters can kill each other. The fish will swim helter skelter until they reach the bottom, like the Aliens in *Space Invaders*. The Crocodile will swim around the stone in the water. If any of the monsters touch the "Young Adventurer," the "Young Adventurer" gets killed. If the "Young Adventurer" gets killed, he starts on the long rope by the door.

10. To get to the Chalice, the "Young Adventurer" must get the key and open the door to the Chalice Room and swing and jump from the ropes, avoiding bear claw traps, which can climb up ropes, and avoiding falling on the spikes.

11. As soon as the "Young Adventurer" touches the Chalice, the game starts over. Players have three men.

12. The points according to the monsters:

One Crocodile	300
One Piranha	100
One Barracuda	20 ea
Jumping over one Bear Claw Trap	10 ea
Touching the Chalice	500

If the player gets a thousand points he gets a free man. There will always be six (6) Bear Claw Traps, two (2) Barracudas, one (1) Piranha and one (1) Crocodile in each game.

We print a reader's game in each issue and pay $25 to the author. Send artwork, description of game, photo and self-addressed stamped envelope to: Games From Readers, Video Games Player, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

Clue #2: Dudley and Penelope

BEAT IT!

GALAGA

Galaga is played in stages. In the "attack" stages, aliens come in groups of eight or more, fire a few missiles and fly into formation. Once they are assembled, they peel off from the group to shower you with missiles. During the "challenging" stages, five groups of non-firing aliens allow you to blast away without fear of losing a ship.

SCORING

While in formation, blue aliens are worth 50 points and red are worth 80. These values are doubled if the aliens are in flight when shot. The green flagships in the top row are good for 150 points in formation and 400 if wasted in flight. The flagships require two shots to die.

It is in the challenging stages where you can really earn hefty bonuses. You are awarded 1000 points and up (depending on the stage you're on) for destroying a group of eight aliens. If you eliminate all five groups you will receive a whopping 10,000 points.

DOUBLE SHIPS

Every so often a flagship will swoop down toward your ship. It will send down a tractor beam. If you enter the beam, your ship will swirl up to join the flagship in formation. To get a double ship, wait until most, if not all, of the aliens have been eliminated and for the flagship (with captured ship in tandem) to attack. Avoid the missiles and then wait for the alien to complete its loop. When it does, blast it. When the alien is destroyed, the captured ship will float down to join your current ship, doubling your firing power from two on-screen shots at a time to four.

> **"Red aliens will head off the bottom of the screen. The blue ones will try to ram your ship from below."**

ATTACK STAGES

Stage one begins with five groups of non-firing aliens, one group at a time, and flying into formation. Group one enters from the top center of the screen. The rows then split apart. If you remain in the middle, you're liable to miss everything. A better tactic is to choose one side and rapidly fire at a whole row of enemies as they turn back in toward the center. Then head for the left side for group two.

This group will curve upward from the bottom left corner of the screen before looping and heading up the middle. Blast as many as you can on the initial curve upward, but then be ready to wipe out the entire row as they approach on the downward portion of their loop. Group three enters in exactly the same way, but from the *right* side of the screen.

The fourth group enters at the top center, but instead of splitting into two rows, a double row of invaders flies toward the left edge and then curves up toward the center. Position your ship at the left side of the screen and take out as much of the outer row as possible just as it begins to curve inward. Handle group five in the same manner and prepare to be attacked.

Two at a time, the aliens will peel off the outer edges and swoop down toward your ship while firing three or four missiles. Concentrate on their flight paths, while using peripheral vision to help you steer clear of the missiles. If possible, destroy the aliens before they get a chance to fire. If not, wait until their missiles pass and then blast them as they finish their loops. Red aliens will head off the bottom of the screen. The blue aliens will try to come up under your ship to ram it from below.

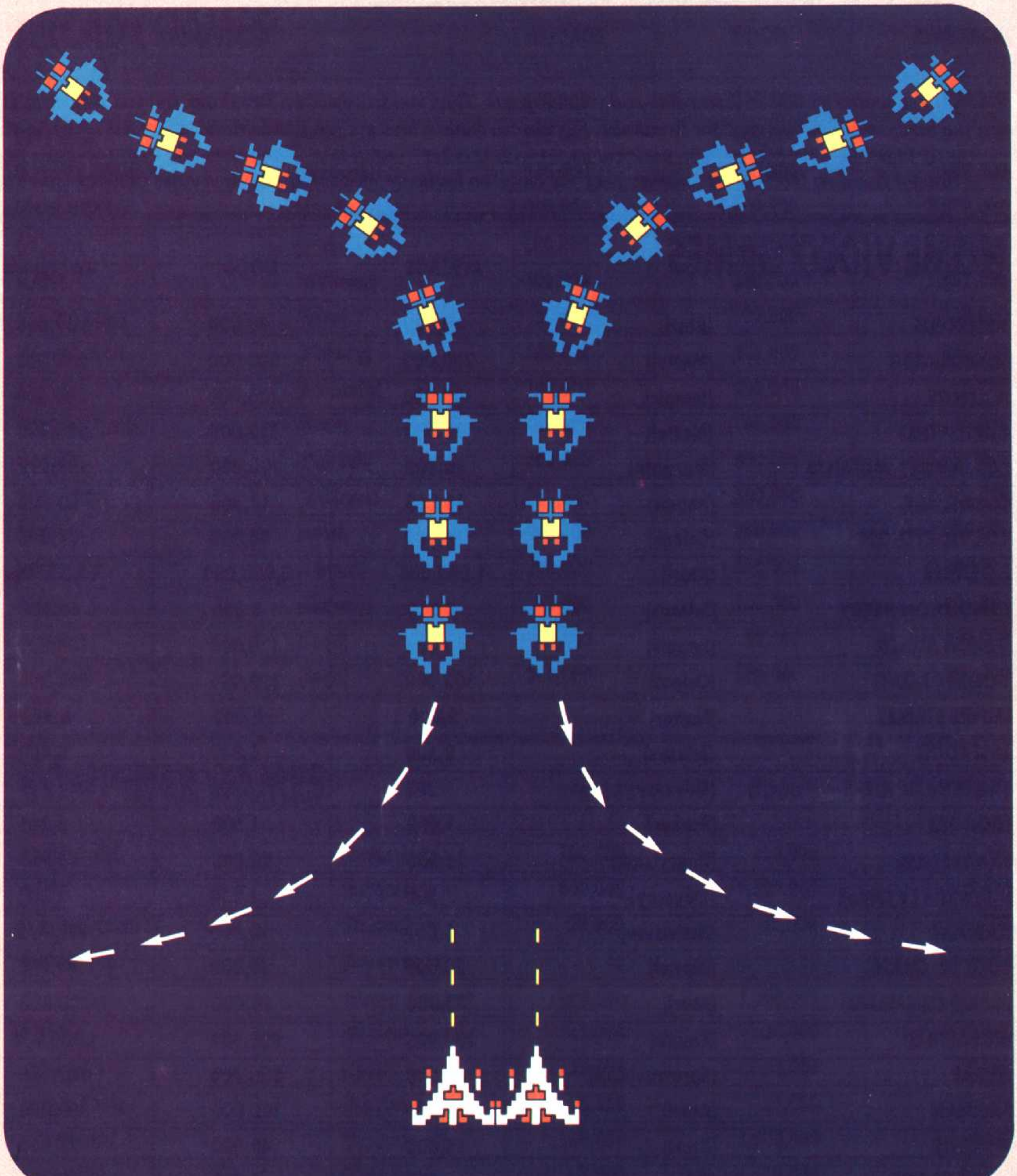
Blast away at the aliens in formation when you get a chance. Although they are worth more when diving, your chances of surviving the stage will be greater if you have fewer attacks to endure.

In stage two, the aliens will bombard you as they enter the screen and they will peel off in groups of three. Your strategy should remain the same. You will, however, have to fire more quickly at the entering aliens, so you'll have time to sidestep their missiles. Be sure not to destroy *all* four flagships until one of them has sent down a tractor beam.

In the third attack stage, the aliens, after completing their bombing raids, head straight for your ship kamikaze-style. You can usually fool them if you shift your position drastically right before they make their dives. This way, the spot they've homed in on is the spot you've just vacated.

CHALLENGING STAGES

The first of *Galaga's* challenging stages is stage three. Like the attack stage, five groups of aliens will fly onto the screen. But instead of flying into formation, the surviving aliens will exit when they have completed their patterns. The key to success is to learn these patterns well, so you can dispose of



With two ships, position yourself right in the center and take out both rows of aliens at once. With one ship, move left or right.

the non-firing creeps before they have a chance to leave.

Group one will enter in two rows of four aliens, from the top center of the screen. The rows begin about an inch apart, but by the time they reach the center, they've curved in so that the two leading aliens overlap. If allowed to survive, the two rows would cross over each other and head off in opposite directions. To avoid this, position your ship (or double ship) in the exact middle of the screen and time your first shot to meet the aliens just as they begin to overlap. If your shots are timed correctly, both rows should explode right into your line of fire. (See illustration)

Remember—kill or be killed.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
65,000

ARE YOU AWESOME?

You just scored 85,000 on **Asteroids** and you feel great. Then you score 400 on **Breakout** and you feel lousy. But actually, 400 is pretty good for **Breakout**. Since video game scores are not standardized, there has never been a way to tell how the score of one game compares with another. . . until now. The games and scores on these pages are not based on the "casual" player. They are based on hardcore, dedicated, obsessed video fanatics. Like you.

HOME VIDEO GAMES		AVERAGE	GOOD	AWESOME!
ASTEROIDS	(Atari)	40,000	70,000	200,000
ASTROSMASH	(Mattel)	200,000	500,000	850,000
ATLANTIS	(Imagic)	100,000	125,000	200,000
BURGERTIME	(Mattel)	75,000	150,000	250,000
COMMUNIST MUTANTS	(Starpath)	12,500	200,000	999,999
COSMIC ARK	(Imagic)	10,000	17,500	25,000
COSMIC AVENGER	(Coleco)	15,000	40,000	73,000
DEFENDER	(Atari)	1,000,000	3,000,000	14,000,000
DEMOLITION HERBY	(Telesys)	4,000	8,000	40,000
DEMON ATTACK	(Imagic)	85,000	110,000	130,000
DONKEY KONG	(Coleco)	100,000	300,000	780,000
EMPIRE STRIKES	(Parker)	2,000	4,000	6,983
FAST FOOD	(Telesys)	2,500	5,000	8,400
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	(Odyssey)	200	850	9,999
FROGGER	(Parker)	1,000	1,500	3,201
JAWBREAKER	(Tigervision)	15,000	22,000	30,000
K.C.'s KRAZY CHASE	(Odyssey)	500	1,250	5,000
KABOOM	(Activision)	3,000	10,000	999,999
LOCK 'N' CHASE	(Mattel)	20,000	50,000	100,000
MISSLE COMMAND	(Atari)	30,000	80,000	200,000
MOUSETRAP	(Coleco)	100,000	400,000	1,000,000
NEXAR	(Spectravision)	45,000	250,000	700,000
PAC-MAN	(Atari)	50,000	100,000	300,000
PHOENIX	(Atari)	15,000	40,000	73,000
PICK AXE PETE	(Odyssey)	500	1,250	9,999
PITFALL!	(Activision)	20,000	40,000	114,000
RIVER RAID	(Activision)	15,000	60,000	1,000,000
SPACE INVADERS	(Atari)	50,000	75,000	200,000
STARMASTER	(Activision)	3,800	3,975	3,971
TURMOIL	(Fox)	25,000	70,000	110,000
VENTURE	(Coleco)	150,000	500,000	1,200,000
ZAXXON	(Coleco)	70,000	200,000	500,000

ARCADE GAMES		AVERAGE	GOOD	AWESOME!
CENTIPEDE	(Atari)	100,000	200,000	400,000
DEFENDER	(Williams)	200,000	600,000	1,500,000
DONKEY KONG JR.	(Nintendo)	350,000	500,000	900,000
FOOD FIGHT	(Atari)	1,000,000	5,000,000	8,000,000
GALAGA	(Midway)	500,000	1,000,000	5,000,000
JOUST	(Williams)	300,000	500,000	1,500,000
JUNGLE HUNT	(Taito)	35,000	70,000	200,000
MS. PAC-MAN	(Midway)	100,000	220,000	250,000
POPEYE	(Nintendo)	100,000	200,000	320,000
POLE POSITION	(Atari)	30,000	45,000	64,000
Q*BERT	(Gottlieb)	200,000	500,000	1,000,000
ROBOTRON	(Williams)	1,000,000	1,500,000	2,000,000
TEMPEST	(Atari)	400,000	800,000	1,300,000
TIME PILOT	(Centuri)	250,000	1,000,000	2,000,000
TRON	(Midway)	75,000	150,000	1,000,000
TURBO	(Sega)	30,000	50,000	100,000
ZAXXON	(Sega)	200,000	500,000	1,000,000

COMPUTER GAMES		AVERAGE	GOOD	AWESOME!
APPLE PANIC	(Broderbund)	100,000	250,000	675,840
AZTEC	(Datamost)	500,000	1,000,000	1,200,000
CANYON CLIMBER	(Datasoft)	20,000	30,000	40,000
CHOPLIFTER	(Broderbund)	15	25	64
CROSSFIRE	(Sierra On-Line)	600,000	1,200,000	2,770,000
GORF	(Roklan)	15,000	30,000	50,000
JUMPMAN	(Epyx)	20,000	35,000	60,000+
MINER 2049er	(Big Five)	15,000	35,000	100,000
SERPENTINE	(Broderbund)	500,000	1,000,000	5,120,300
SNEAKERS	(Sirius)	3,000	10,000	40,000
SNACK ATTACK	(Datamost)	5,000	20,000	50,000
SNOOPER TROOPS #1	(Spinnaker)	25 hrs.	20 hrs.	10 hrs.
SURVIVOR	(Synapse)	40,000	70,000	110,000
TUBEWAY	(Datamost)	20,000	70,000	100,000
WAYOUT	(Sirius)	40	20	11
WIZARD OF WOR	(Roklan)	30,000	70,000	100,000
ZAXXON	(Datasoft)	40,000	62,500	100,000

MAGIC ALEX

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

two things both be meaningful.

VGP: But you're not going to tell us what it is?

AL: I sure am not. I could talk about it in a general way which would put other programmers on the scent of the trail. Or I can talk about it in specific way and every programmer who reads this will know how to do it. It's something I just don't want to give up right now.

VGP: How did you get to be so smart so fast?

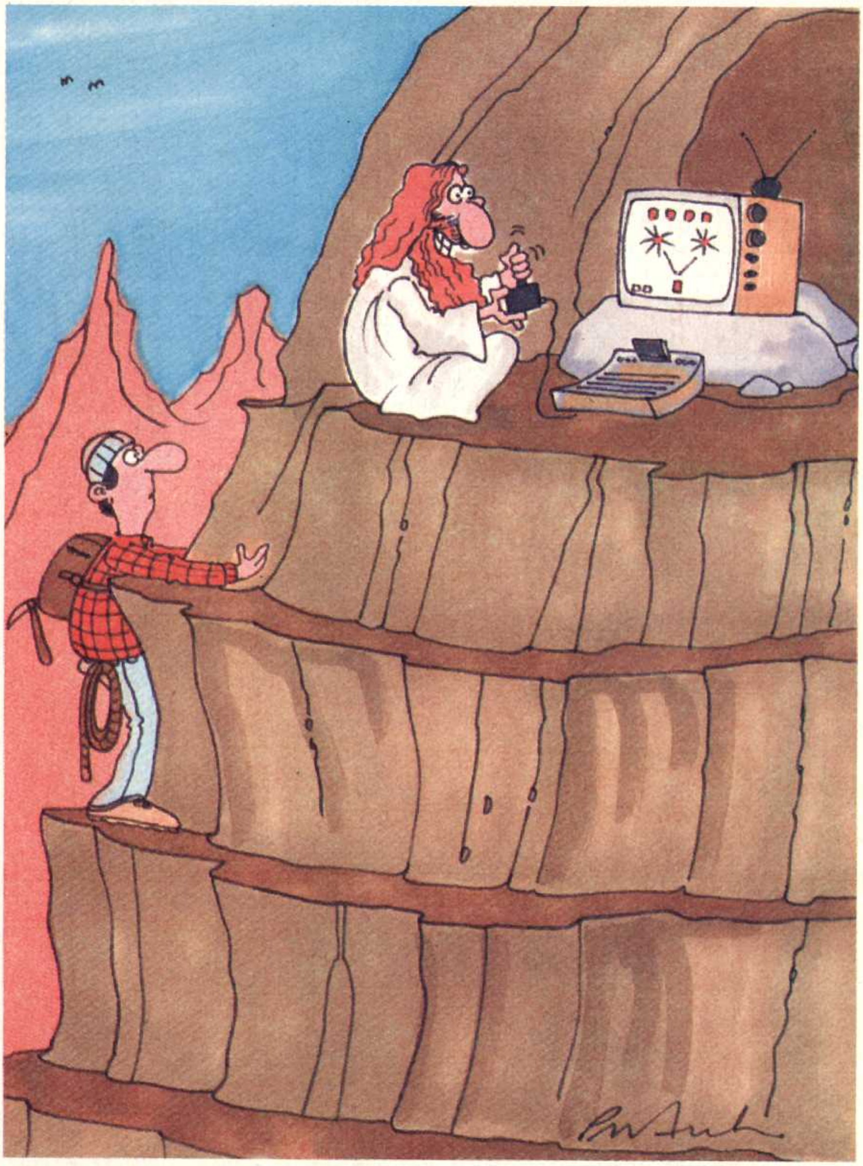
AL: I'm a voracious reader—and that's a piece of advice.

VGP: So all the kids who read the magazine should read voraciously, and find out what "voracious" means.

AL: Right. Find out what voracious means before you start reading.

VGP: So rather than playing video games, they should be reading?

AL: Video games are a lot of fun. I play a lot of them and will continue to do so. But reading is the best way we have found to transmit information from one person to another. Read *everything*. I just read an article about this device that lets doctors take a patient, run him through this machine, and get a three dimensional picture of, say, his heart. And they can rotate the heart in space, look at it from different angles, and even cut it in half. Wow! That blows my mind! That's great! I read a lot because that's how you find out what's going on. Read the video magazines. Read the audio magazines. Read the science magazines. I read it all and I'm fascinated by it all. I think that's very important—to maintain a sense of wonder and excitement. You shouldn't be afraid of the future. ☐



MS. PAC-MAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

If you make it this far, congratulations! Your main concern should be surviving long enough to reap the 10,000 bonus points accompanying those two bouncing bananas. Energy pills now last only between one-and-a-half and two seconds, so you won't be gobbling up many more ghosts.

There is, however, one sure way to gulp down at least one ghost for each energy pill consumed. Rather than waiting beside an energy pill until a ghost is dangerously close and then eating the pill, reversing direction, and giving chase, you should follow a ghost as closely as possible *when he runs over the pill*. This way you get to continue in one direction as the ghost reverses and heads straight into Ms. Pac-Man's waiting jaws.

The fourth maze is fairly open and easy to maneuver around with just a few exceptions. The escape tunnels, though located similarly to those in maze one, are shielded by a T-shaped barrier on each side of the maze. So it takes a few more turns to enter or leave the maze. At the top center of the maze there is a small niche containing six dots. Since there are only two points of access to this area, it is easy to get trapped by two ghosts entering simultaneously at both ends while you're in the middle. Therefore, be extremely careful while clearing this section of dots.

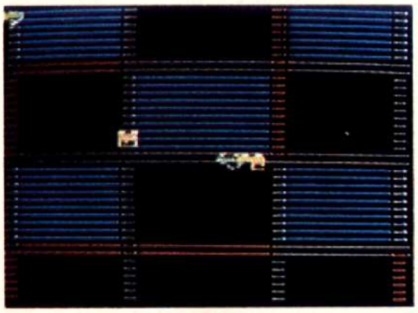
That should give you all the information you need to know to do a job on *Ms. Pac-Man* and amaze your friends. You will notice, by the way, that with this and other home games, the better you are at the game, the better you will probably do in the arcade version of the game. *Ms. Pac-Man* the arcade game is quite similar to *Ms. Pac-Man* the Atari VCS cartridge. "How To Play Forever" (see page 42) will give you another tip for Ms. Pac-Man—if you can complete the 137th board of the arcade game, the board will turn upside down. But the dots will all be in the right place. When you clear the board, there is a 75% chance you will receive 64 free games.

Keep an eye out for the 5200 version of *Ms. Pac-Man*.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL: 50,000

VIDEO GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Raymond Dimetrosky



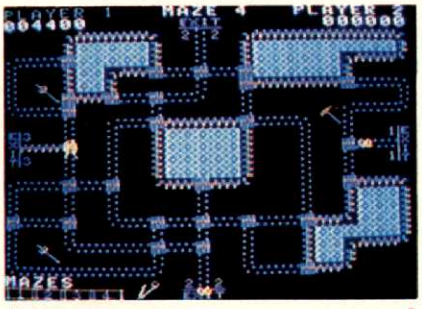
DEMOLITION HERBY

A

So you think all driving games are the same, eh? Well, here you travel around a grid, filling in blocks. Whenever you enclose a square it becomes black and you get more fuel. Your opponents are chase cars that attempt to erase your red lines and crash into you. Your goal is to black out the entire grid before you run out of fuel.

Demolition Herby is colorful, fast-moving, and addicting. The bright blue grid is striking. You can use your joystick's red button as a gas pedal, to quickly escape the chase cars. Strategy is important here, since you can earn bonus points by completing two squares with one line or by ramming into the chase cars. There's even a two-player version in which your opponent controls the chase cars. *Demolition Herby* is similar to *Amidar*, but twice as good.

Telesys, for Atari VCS



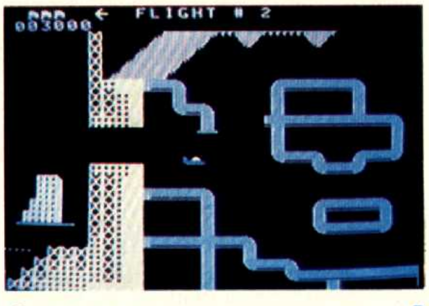
PEPPER II

A

The designers of *Pepper II* have taken all the characteristics that make up good maze games and added extra touches to produce a contest that is exceptional. Here, instead of eating dots, you roam around "zipping up" rooms. And while there are the usual villains to avoid, they are unique—roaming eyes and a "zipper ripper." As in all good maze games, you get to turn the tables and chase the monsters. You can also score bonus points if you enclose rooms that contain prizes. But best of all, in *Pepper II* you can travel at will among four different mazes. If you complete all four, you advance to a level with invisible tracks!

Pepper II is excellent. There are three songs (including the dreary theme from the *Alfred Hitchcock* show) and incredibly colorful graphics. Each maze has its own set of colors. While it's enjoyable to play for points, in this game it's fun just to watch the mazes as they are colored in. Since there's relatively no violence, this is one game that can be enjoyed by every member of the family.

Coleco, for ColecoVision



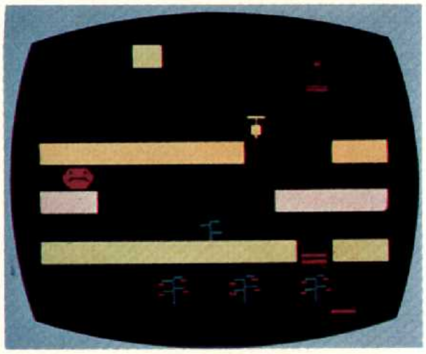
LOOPING

B

You're the pilot of a plane in a world filled with green drops, twinkle monsters, bouncing balls, and hot-air balloons. You must shoot and destroy these obstacles. Since the only way to turn around is by making a loop, you had better navigate carefully. Most of your trip will be through rooms full of twisted pipes.

Like the arcade game, *Looping* is not a game you can quickly master. Your plane is extremely sensitive to every movement of the joystick. Numerous crashes are inevitable. But how many times have you purchased a game only to find you could conquer it in a few hours? The graphics are colorful and detailed (especially the runway and radar tower) and the sound effects, which feature a roaring plane, are done well. So, while younger children may find this game a bit frustrating, those interested in a challenge will be satisfied.

Coleco, for ColecoVision



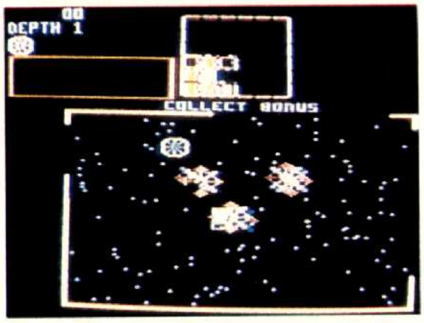
REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

C

This game is like *Breakout*, in reverse. You must build three walls over a row of tomato plants by catching orange, pink, and green bricks. The tomato plants fire at you, and you must deal with beefsteak tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, and brick-eating vines. You score points by destroying the various foes, capturing and placing bricks, and completing walls.

At first glance this game seems really novel. A number of bizarre opponents travel around in an attempt to destroy you. But the play action, especially in the easy versions, quickly becomes dull. At times you cannot continue until you find a particular colored brick, and you find yourself sitting around thinking of other things . . . like what video game you're going to play next. Good title, though.

Fox Video Games, for Atari VCS

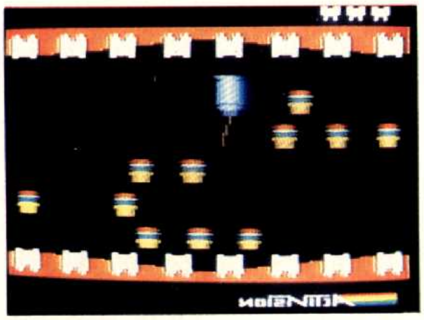


SPACE DUNGEON B+

In *Space Dungeon* you travel through connecting rooms in an attempt to destroy enemies and collect treasures. When you've scooped up a few desirable prizes, you drop them off into a "collect bonus" room. You can sneak a peek at the map above the main rooms.

The most unique feature of *Space Dungeon* is that it takes two joysticks to play. Like *Robotron*, you control movement with one stick and direction of fire with the other. This may be confusing for those people who are not adept at using the 5200 controllers. Once you get the hang of it, though, the game really takes off. It's a wild shoot-'em-up adventure game. With all of the interconnecting rooms and the many different levels, there is enough variety here to last you for a while. Add to this the above-average graphics and sound effects, and you end up with an enjoyable space adventure.

Atari, for 5200

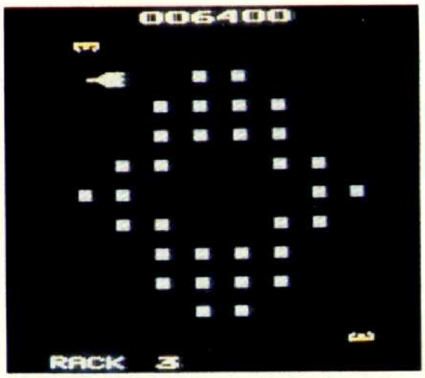


PLAQUE ATTACK B+

You must protect a mouth full of teeth from various types of food that are trying to decay them. Your weapon? A tube of toothpaste, of course. You have 35 seconds to squirt your attackers. If you eliminate them, you receive bonus points for time and teeth remaining. When you reach 2,000 points, you earn an extra tooth.

This game is ingenious! You are attacked by everything from cheeseburgers to ice cream cones. And the graphics are truly outstanding. The packets of french fries look like they've just been served at McDonalds, and you can almost taste the sickeningly sweet candy canes. *Plaque Attack* also has some great extra features. When the junk food reaches one of your teeth, it turns bright yellow and disintegrates. And you are alerted that your time is running low by the toothpaste tube—it begins to roll up! Actually, if you strip away the great graphics, *Plaque Attack* is another shoot-'em-up game. But this contest is so clever, you'll quickly feel as if you're playing something that's unique. Oddly, it reminds me of *Missile Command.*

Activision, for Atari VCS

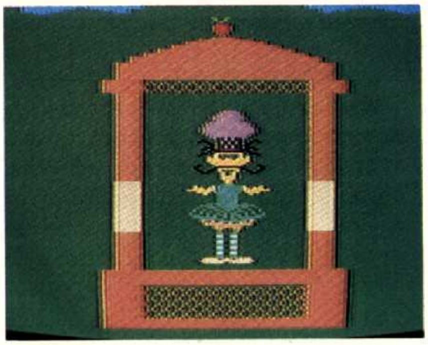


SOLAR FOX B+

Solar Fox proves you don't have to have good graphics to have a good game. The field is almost black and white. You have a simple airplane shape which flies over various configurations of geometric blocks. You must touch all the blocks and avoid fire from above and below.

What seems like a simple space game actually has depth to it. If you finish a wave in less than ten seconds, you get to skip a wave. Among the 26 different waves are "Challenge Racks," which are tests of speed. Succeed in a Challenge Rack and you get a secret letter. With six secret letters, you learn the secret of *Solar Fox.* This game is straightforward, addicting, very much an eye-hand game, and *very* tough to beat.

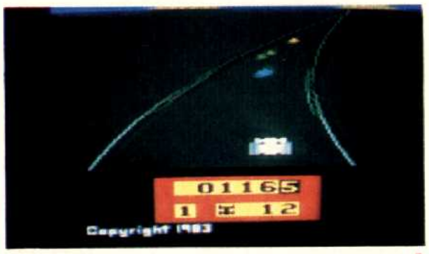
CBS Electronics, for Atari VCS. Also for Intellivision, Atari 5200, and Atari 400/800.



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE MUSICAL MATCHUPS A

There are six Strawberry Land characters, each with his own three-piece outfit and musical tune. But alas, their bodies have become mixed up, and only *you* can put them back together. If you succeed, they dance a little jig while their theme song plays in the background and their names appear beneath them. There are six different games. The easiest contests allow you to create any character you want, while in the more difficult games you are given a name or melody and you must correctly form a specific person. They're all extremely colorful and melodic. In fact, never before have so many different tunes been heard in one VCS cartridge. And one look at the Strawberry Land characters and you'll be awed by the graphics. There's even a smiling sun that sails across the sky to indicate time remaining. For girls from four to seven, *Strawberry Shortcake* is a dream come true. Everyone else—this one isn't made for you.

Parker Brothers, for Atari VCS

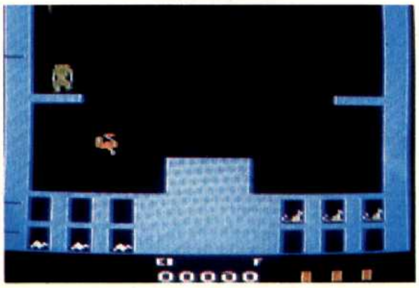


ENDURO A

Imagine this—You're about to begin a 24-hour race across winding roads. You have to pass a predetermined number of cars or you'll be disqualified. Yet if you give a little too much gas, you crash. So keep a close eye on the color of the sky (it changes as the race progresses, to reflect the time of day), and soar around the track. After all, you score is determined by the number of miles you travel.

To put it simply, *Enduro* is the best driving game ever created for Atari VCS. Your engine roars as you accelerate, and your mileage is clocked on an odometer that even registers tenths of a mile. While it may seem strange to steer with a joystick instead of a paddle, your car is surprisingly easy to control. The designers have cleverly utilized color to create skies, which are absolutely beautiful. And thanks to the occasional trips through snow and fog, the game does not become boring. For those of you who enjoy racing car games, this exciting and challenging contest is highly recommended. It actually approaches Coleco's *Turbo*.

Activision, for Atari VCS

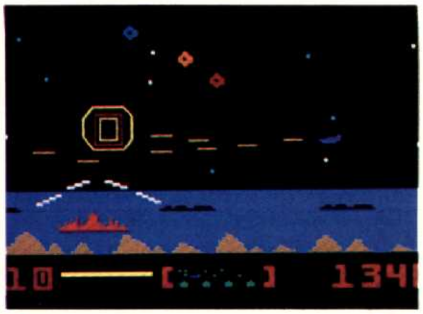


SKY SKIPPER C+

You are the pilot who must shoot gorillas and rescue the animals that they have captured. When you shoot a gorilla, you have a limited amount of time to complete your mission or he'll regain consciousness and the animals will return to their cages. You must also keep an eye on your fuel gauge, and, most importantly, don't crash into any walls or you'll instantly lose a life.

Playing the game becomes a measure of your ability to travel within narrow pathways. If you're into games that require a great deal of precision, you may enjoy the challenge. Others, however, will quickly become frustrated, and may find the game repetitive. To the designer's credit, whenever you free one group of animals, you are presented with a different maze, with a new set of obstacles.

Parker Brothers, for Atari VCS



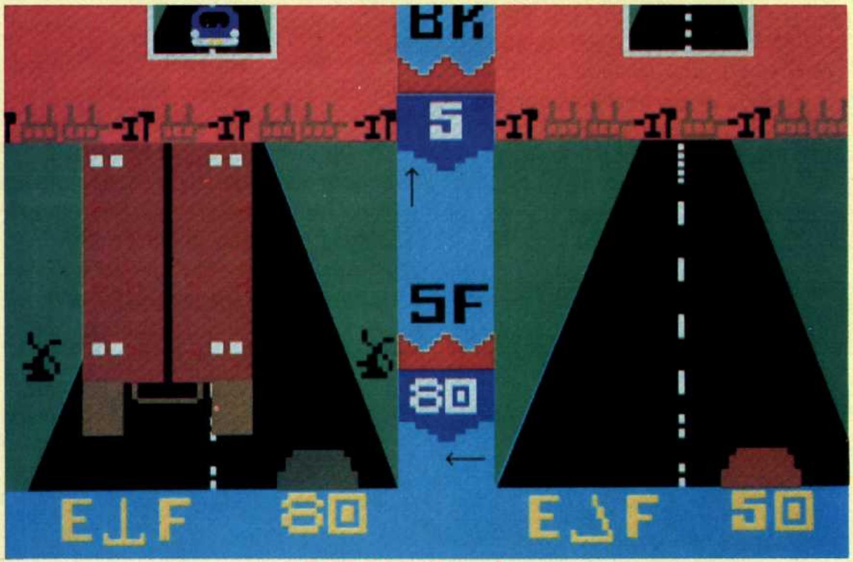
NOVA BLAST B+

You must protect four cities that are enclosed in capsules. You battle wave upon wave of attackers with your lasers and bombs. To aid in your defense, you are equipped with damage and fuel indicators, radar, and a beaming device that will temporarily replace destroyed capsules.

In many ways *Nova Blast* is similar to *Defender*. This is a scrolling contest in which you fly around shooting at numerous enemies. The graphics are excellent, especially the domed cities with their clear, vibrating capsules. The special effects are equally exciting. When a capsule is destroyed, it smashes into pieces that fly in every direction. One interesting feature of this game involves the attackers—only one type of creature opposes you at a time. So, if you like plenty of shoot-'em-up action, you'll have a great time with *Nova Blast*. And since there are still a limited number of quality space games for Intellivision, it's a fine addition to your collection.

Imagic, for Intellivision

GAME OF THE MONTH

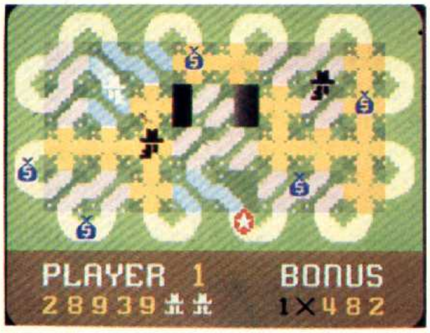


TRUCKIN' A+

If designers are interested in knowing what makes an outstanding game, they should look at *Truckin'*. The game is so involved, it is impossible to fully describe it here. In brief, there are two different games. In the first, you must drive through eight cities in the shortest time possible. You can choose from 59 different routes. In the second, your goal is to deliver loads of cargo to various cities in order to make as much money as possible.

Truckin' is one of the most complex video games ever produced. The screen switches from a view of the road, to a gas station, to a rest stop, to charts that present vital information. When you are travelling on the highway, you simply avoid the other vehicles. But a closer look reveals a horn which you blow to warn other vehicles, scenery representing the area in the country you are in, and police who catch you when you speed. In this game you do more than step on the accelerator. In fact, *Truckin'* is to racing games what *Star Raiders* is to space games.

Imagic, for Intellivision

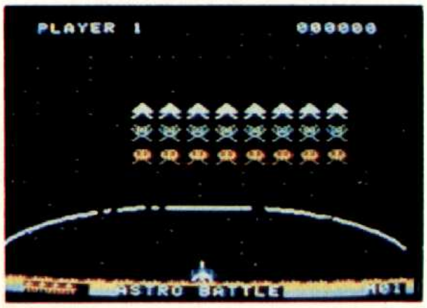


HAPPY TRAILS B-

Happy Trails is a maze game that is unlike any other video game. The difference? You control the maze. The playfield is divided into square segments, with winding paths crossing each segment. You control a bounty hunter (a big hat with feet). You must arrange the maze before your bounty hunter walks off the path. On your way, you attempt to collect money bags and capture Black Bart, the villain.

You'll either love it or hate it. There's a great deal of strategy involved, and those of you who enjoy maze games will be challenged by the unending number of mazes. But the gamer who revels in shoot-out action will quickly become bored.

Activision, for Intellivision

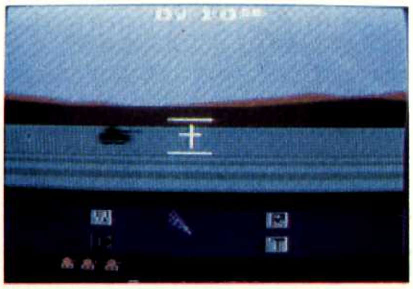


GORF B+

The unique feature of this space game is that you get four separate missions. When you eliminate one wave of opponents, instead of challenging a faster group of the same creatures, you begin a completely different task. The first wave, "Astro Battle," closely resembles *Space Invaders*. The second round, "Laser Attack," pits you against robot ships that are firing lasers. The third round, "Space Warp," requires you to dodge radiation bombs and destroy new robot ships. In the fourth round, "Flagship," you must avoid fireballs and destroy the flagship's internal reactor.

For the most part, *Gorf* is another shoot-'em-up that tests your reflexes. But it will probably hold your interest longer than the average space battle, since each contest is really four games in one. Add to this Coleco's usual quality sound effects and graphics (the space warp scene which places you in the middle of streaking red, orange, and yellow lights is particularly outstanding) and you end up with a very good game.

Coleco, for ColecoVision

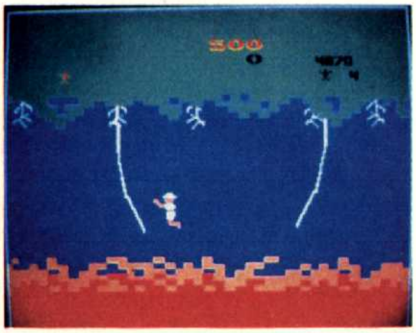


ROBOT TANK A

"Excellent," "fantastic," and "incredible" are not good enough words to describe this *Battlezone*-clone. You are *in* the tank, and tanks are all around firing, for some reason, big black squares at you. You can roll toward them, away from them, and turn in circles. The scene changes from day to night and the weather changes from sun to fog and snow. If you've got video-damage, you can use your radar scope.

You will be amazed. Realism—incredible. Graphics—terrific. Game play—very good. Sound—average. Overall rating—Super Wonderful Fun.

Activision, for Atari VCS

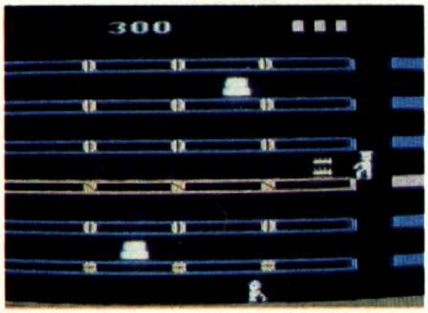


JUNGLE HUNT B+

Your wife has been kidnapped by savages. To rescue her, you must swing on the vines through the Deadly Forest, swim past crocodiles in Reptile River, leap over boulders in Boulder Field, and avoid the spears thrown by the savages in the Cannibal Camp.

Considering the limitations of the VCS, this adaptation of the arcade hit is quite good. There are four colorful scrolling scenes and each setting contains its own bunch of obstacles. The cartridge includes two versions, one for beginners and one for experts, so every member of the family can expect to be challenged. As for the graphics, don't expect the detail of the arcade game, but all in all, they're satisfactory. At least you can readily tell what everything is. And there are some features that are rarely seen in a VCS game. For example, when you kill a crocodile, the points that you have earned appear on the screen. This game is not quite up to the level of Activision's *Pitfall*, but enough of the flavor of the arcade hit has been maintained to make it a winner.

Atari, for Atari VCS



CAKEWALK B-

You're a baker who has to catch cakes that are travelling along six conveyor belts. If a pastry falls, a janitor cleans up the mess. When enough cakes have been boxed you earn a coffee break.

Cakewalk is a fast-moving contest that will really test your strategic thinking. You can freeze one conveyor belt at a time, but you still must deal with five rows full of rapidly approaching goodies. There are 16 variations, which allow you to choose between such options as fast-moving bakers, faster conveyer belts, and bakeshops filled only with dancing gingerbread men. There are different types of cakes, even cakes with candles, and when they drop they turn into mush. To break up the monotony, there are deadly knives and forks.

CommaVid, for Atari VCS

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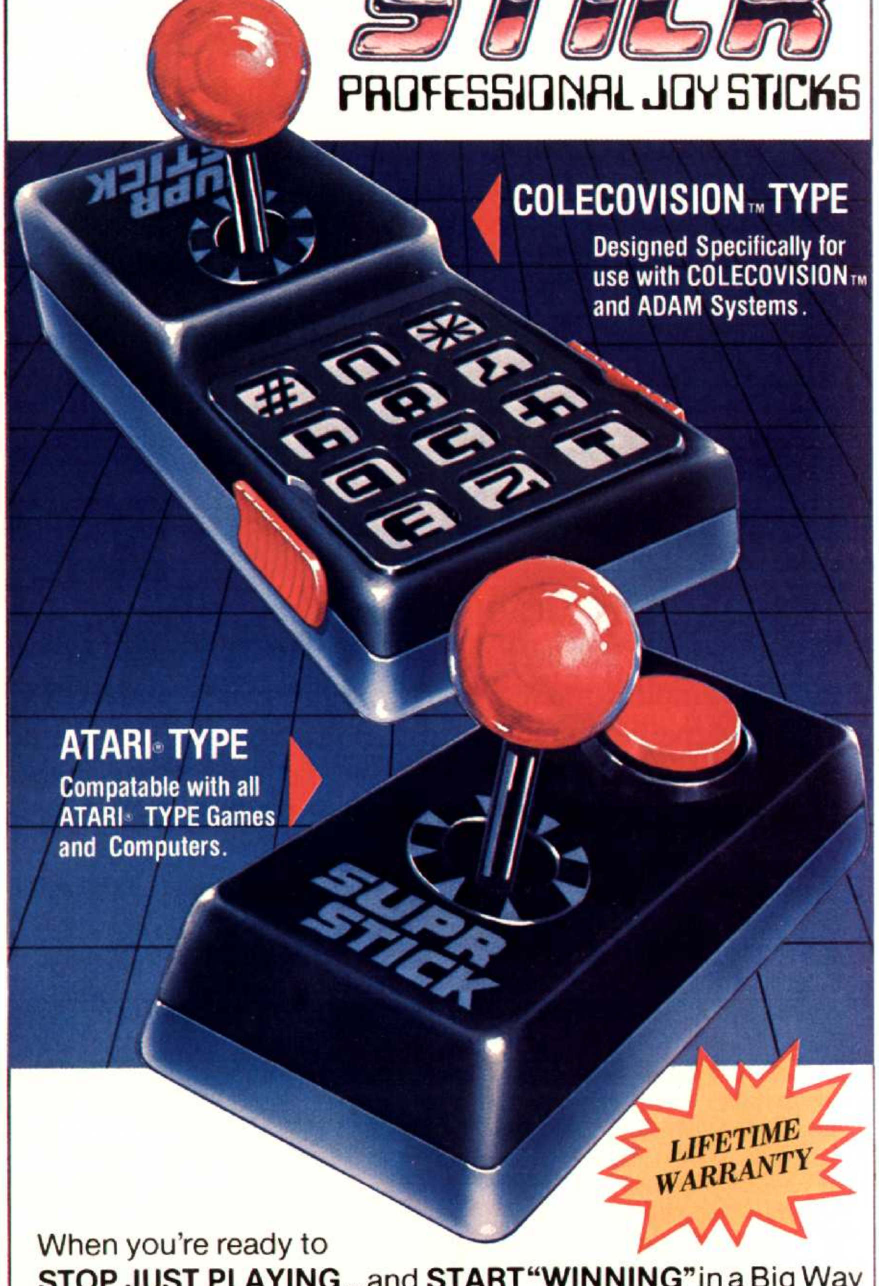

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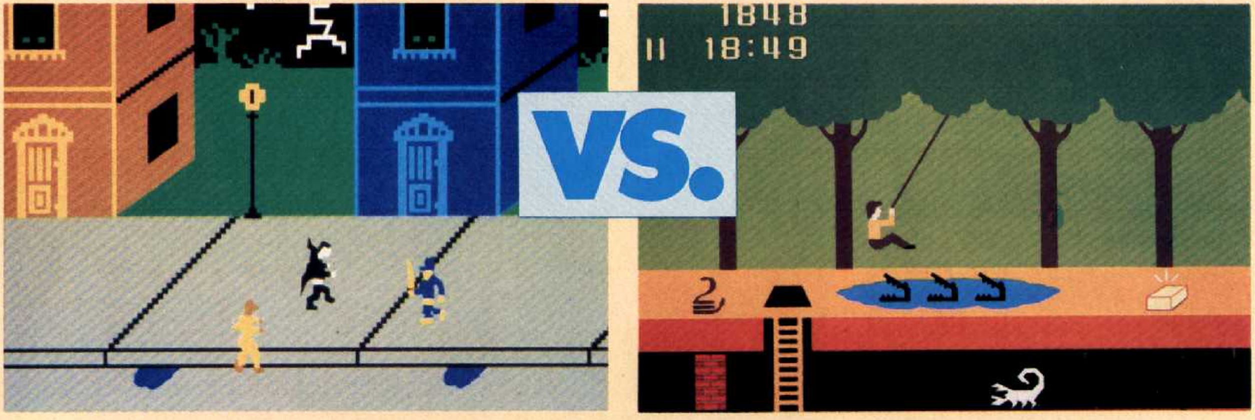
ONE ON ONE

By Michael Blanchet

DRACULA (Imagic, for Intellivision) **PITFALL! (Activision, for Intellivision)**



UNLIKE THE MOVIES AND BOOK, *DRACULA* FOR INTELLIVISION IS NOT A "scary" game. It's actually quite funny—a tongue in cheek contest in which the player, turned vampire, must creep through town in search of victims.

The game begins in an English graveyard. "Drac" emerges from his tomb and floats to the sidewalk in bat form. In each round there are an increasing number of available victims. Drac must find them all, bite them and return to his coffin before the timer reads six a.m.

To flush out a victim, Drac just knocks on the nearest door. If someone emerges, Drac has to chase him. He can do so either in bat or man form. As a bat he's capable of swift flight, but also a sitting duck for the vulture that's stalking him. When he wishes to bite his victim, Drac must revert back to human form. At this point you can either bite him or turn him into a zombie, which in turn can be dispatched against the bobbies that are hot on your trail.

The game really heats up when these cops start walking the beat. While chasing his victims, he must also avoid the cops and the wooden stakes they're tossing at him. If a stake hits him, the Count is temporarily immobilized and must wait for it to disintegrate before he can move.

Dracula is best when played by two people. In this mode the contestants alternate control of the vampire. One plays the Count while the other controls the victim. When a victim is turned into a zombie, he can be used to attack the cops. In the one-player version you may find it difficult to use a zombie to any advantage.

Dracula's greatest asset is that it's a challenging game that's also humorous and lighthearted. One of the nicest touches is the Count's lumbering walk.

Graphically, *Dracula* offers a wealth of detail. Thunder rolls, lightning bolts dance across the sky, and there are even cracks in the sidewalk and puddles along the side of the road.

Compared to most Intellivision games, *Dracula* is easy to learn. Just select the difficulty level and you're off. As expected, Drac is a little tough to control. Regardless, this game is as much fun to watch as to play.

Graphically, there's little difference between VCS *Pitfall!* and its Intellivision counterpart. As an Atari cartridge, it looks top-notch in light of other VCS games. In the Intellivision format, though, the graphics are inferior to recent Imagic offerings, not to mention some of Mattel's own stuff. The mechanics of play also remain unchanged, and this detracts slightly from the game. As a VCS cartridge, *Pitfall!* is amazingly complex, but as an Intellivision cartridge it loses ground to other recent fantasy adventure offerings.

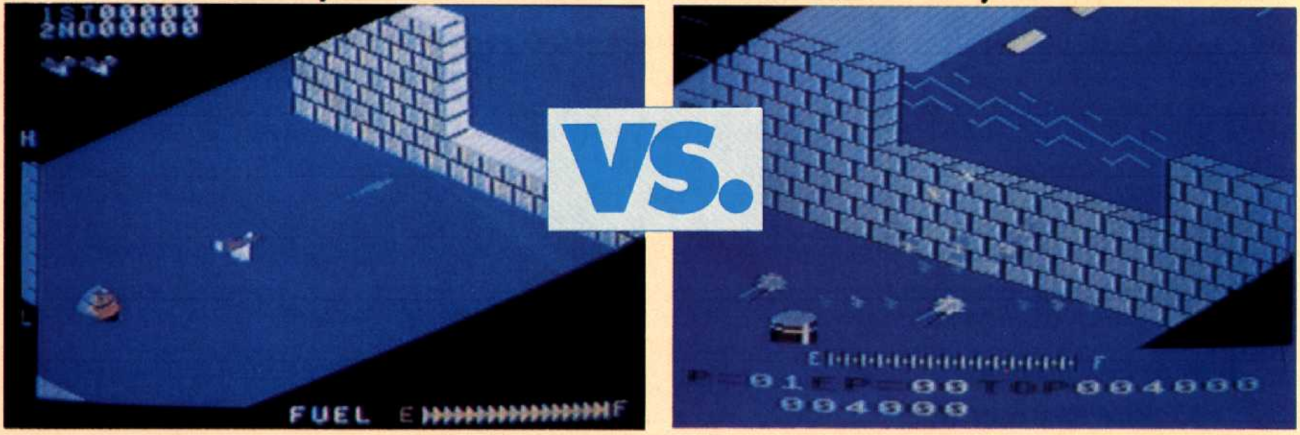
The object of the game is to collect as many of the 32 treasures as possible within 20 minutes. The jungle spans 255 screens, connected end to end.

Finding the treasures is easy. It's getting to them that's difficult. Upon exiting the first screen, "Pitfall Harry" encounters a never-ending trail of hazards: tar pits, rolling logs, crocodiles, fires and snakes. These can be avoided by running leaps and swings across conveniently placed vines. Easy enough to do with a joystick, but another story entirely with the Intellivision disc controller. That darn disc seems to contradict everything logical about moving a game character. I found it quite difficult to coordinate the functions of running and jumping in unison. This can make the game a frustrating experience.

If you're looking for pure adventure, *Pitfall!* might be the way to go. But since it was originally made for the Atari VCS, don't expect to get bowled over. For treasure hunters who prefer to stray from the beaten path, buy *Dracula*.

ONE ON ONE

ZAXXON (Coleco, for ColecoVision) **ZAXXON (Datasoft, for Atari 400/800)**



LIKE COIN-OP *ZAXXON*, THE COLECO AND DATASOFT VERSIONS ARE broken into four battles. The first and third stages involve flying over a heavily fortified floating rock. Between each stone you'll encounter a fleet of enemy jets. Either kill or be killed. At the end of the second asteroid you'll face *Zaxxon*, the missile-spewing robot. You can either destroy the robot with six well-placed shots or simply survive the encounter by destroying or dodging his missiles he fires at you. Whatever the outcome, the round will end at this point and you'll find yourself back at the front end of another fortress.

As these two *Zaxxons* are played on two different types of hardware, there is no point in telling you to buy one over the other. However, it is interesting to see the differences and similarities in the two games and note how the Coleco and Datasoft designers translated the arcade hit into the home format.

First off, neither game fully captures the feel of the arcade game. That is just impossible. You don't have that big pistol grip at home, the high-resolution monitor, or the booming arcade speakers. But given these limitations, both Coleco and Datasoft have given us admirable translations. If you own a ColecoVision or an Atari computer, you will not be disappointed with the job they have done with *Zaxxon*. The Coleco game is their best-selling cartridge to date and Datasoft's computer game *Zaxxon* is number one on the Softsel list of all current computer games. As *Zaxxon*'s three-dimensionality revolutionized arcade games, it is doing the same for home games. At the same time, the flaws of arcade *Zaxxon*, the difficulty in estimating height and distance, are found in both home games.

The games are not identical. One look at the photos above shows that the Datasoft version fills almost the entire screen while the Coleco game occupies a narrower diagonal strip. Everything appears larger in the computer game, including your ship. That doesn't necessarily mean the computer game is better. In the Coleco game, your smaller ship gives you extra reaction time, maneuverability, and makes it easier to slip through the force fields that guard the fortresses. But the scale on the Datasoft game more closely approximates the arcade *Zaxxon*.

Coleco makes up for it in spectacular graphics. The fortresses are works of art, armed to the teeth. They have taken special care to recreate the missile silos from the arcade game, and have added a new enemy—dome shaped robots that shoot missiles at you. My only complaint is the way the field scrolls. Instead of zooming along, your jet sputters and jumps from place to place. The Datasoft game, though lacking in some of the graphic detail, scrolls very smoothly.

The Atari computers, fortunately, accept "specialty" joysticks, and you're going to need one. A big bathandle will give you a better feel of a plane—the short staff on the Coleco controller just doesn't make it. when you do battle with Zaxxon himself, you have to punch off shots rapid-fire. You may find yourself banging your Coleco controller against the furniture to do this. A few companies are now starting to make controllers for the ColecoVision, and you might want to pick one up. Keep in mind, by the way, when you plan your video game budget, the Coleco's *Zaxxon* costs nearly twice as much as the other Coleco games. I suppose those added graphics cost quite a bit to put in.

This is not a battle of "video game versus computer game." ColecoVision can accept game cartridges as complex as 24K, which is more than many home computers. A game played on a computer is not necessarily better than a game played on a video game system. Rather, it is a matter of how each game designer interprets the game.

SOUND IN VIDEO GAMES

How do they make it?
How do we use it?

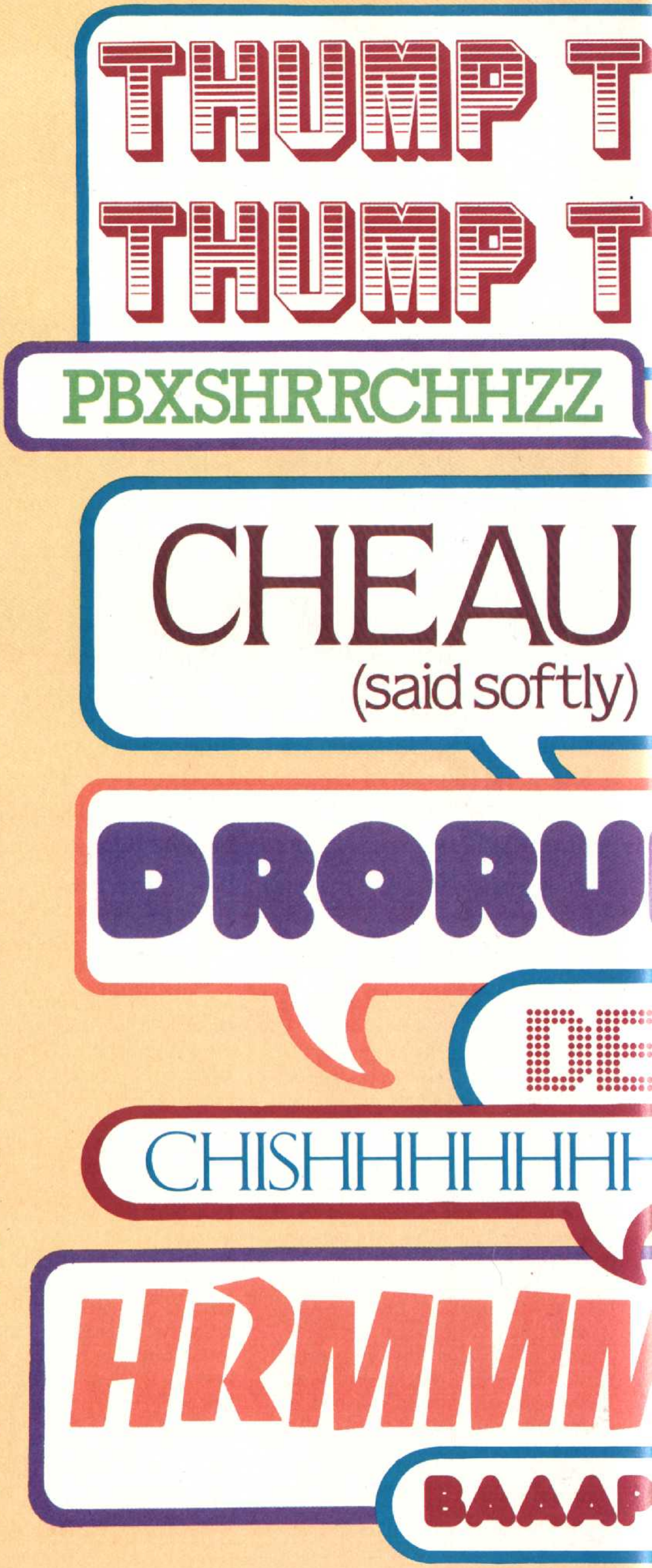
By Josh Martin

What is a video game without sound? Your ears tell you if your guns have fired, whether you hit your target and when the monsters are coming. There are trumpets of victory and the agony of defeat, not to mention other nifty squeaks, squeals, screams and, on occasion, voices. Sound is the unsung hero of the video game.

Somewhere in the wilds of New Jersey is a group of engineers and technicians, gathered like scientists, thinking up sounds you have never heard, for games that no one has ever played. This is the design team of Activision. Elaborate precautions are taken to ensure secrecy at this lab. Even a simple phone call from the outside must get special clearance from a separate office in New York. Company officials strictly limit outside contact for the engineers and technicians: "They don't disturb them for any reason," said an amazed secretary. "They're serious, too."

In this quiet atmosphere, designers work on sound effects for explosions, rockets and symphony orchestras. As long as there have been video games, there have been sounds to listen to while playing. Of course, back in the early days, those sounds were pretty much limited to the *beep* of a moving cursor as it hit the edge of a playing field.

Now, after years spent developing graphics, the Activision game designers and others are going to work on



Can you name the games that belong with these sounds? See the end of this article for the answers.

HUMP
HUMP
WHEOOOOOOOOOOOO
NRUUUR
WHUMP, WUMP, WUMP
PLUGAHAH, PLUGAHAH
MMMMMMMMMM
DLE-LEE, DEEDLE-DEE
H
MMMMM
BAAAP BAAP
WACA
WACA
WACA

soundtracks, to make what you hear as good as what you see. The results are audible in home and arcade games: better music, realistic action sounds, and high-quality voice synthesis.

Case in point: *Pong*, admittedly a pioneer game, used an effect that sounded more like a beeping radar screen than the bouncing tennis ball it was supposed to represent. But the ball in Activision's *Tennis* (Atari VCS) generates authentic "thwacks" when it's whacked with a racket.

In the arcades, sound has also been evolving for the better. Who could forget the gimmicky explosions in *Space Invaders*? They sounded more like little electronic pops—hardly what you'd expect from an exploding space ship. In *Zaxxon*, however, the devastation done to enemy fuel tanks and rockets is often realistic enough to make you want to dive for cover. (And let's not forget *Sub-Roc*, whose designers didn't forget impressive sound effects when dreaming up those razzle-dazzle 3-D graphics.)

Activision's *Dolphin* demonstrates the most enterprising and innovative exploitation of sound so far. Many games warn of impending danger with an appropriately timed noise, but this one helps out with varying sonic cues —differences in the sound's pitch signal the safest direction in which to swim to avoid the killer octopus. Designing such effects is obviously even more challenging—and sometimes as much fun—as playing the game itself, according to some programmers.

> **"The goal is sound realism—a car crash in which you feel the twisted metal, an explosion that rocks you back from the controls."**

Garry Kitchen is one of three brothers who design games for Activision. Sound has become a new challenge for this video veteran. "I don't think I've done as much with sound as I can," he says. "It's still mostly support for graphics."

"You put sound in and take it out as you design your game," Kitchen adds. "You have to consider that the sound must fit into the memory that's available. It's a delicate balance between making things good and making them fit."

For Mark Turmell, a game designer with Sirius (*Beer Run*, *Sneakers*, *Turmoil*, *Fast Eddie*) soundtracks are the result of a lot of testing. "It's an intricate process," he says. "Sounds are made up of numbers in a computer. It often starts on a random basis."

Making that random sound perfect takes time, experience, and money. Suzanne Ciani, the musician and electronic effects specialist whose work can be heard in Bally's *Xenon* pinball game, works 12 to 18 hours a day, with an array of 28 synthesizers. This custom-built equipment is expensive—one synthesizer can cost $60,000—and so is Ciani's talent. A Ciani soundtrack will cost as much as $25,000.

Even the shortest soundtrack can take

HOW DO YOU MAKE A SOUND?

There are hard sounds and soft sounds, representing different frequencies and sound-wave patterns. Hard sound waves are jagged and look like sawteeth. As a number pattern (which is how sound programmers create it), a hard sound might read 1,2,3,1,2,3. This pattern can be used to create a motorcycle noise.

Another type of hard sound is created by square-wave systems, which sets up number patterns like 1,1,3,3,1,1,3,3. The visual pattern is like a light being turned on and off. A thunder clap can be made by using square-wave noise.

A soft sound creates a wiggly sound wave that can be seen in a number pattern like 1,2,3,2,1,2,3,2. This is used to simulate footsteps or gentle noises.

In *Q*bert*, the sound programmer started at a computer terminal by typing in numbers, which were turned into electrical power in a Digital Analogue Converter (DAC). A DAC can produce up to 256 different voltage levels, so the programmer can type in numbers ranging in size from 1 to 256. Then the programmer determined the speed at which the numbers change, which is the speed of running through different voltage levels. This determines the resulting sound frequency.

Howard Delman, a former hardware designer with Atari who was responsible for *Asteroids*, explains how an explosion is created:

"An explosion is a random selection of sound frequencies. It starts off very loud and then falls off. The way to make one explosion different from another is to select different frequencies. The sounds are all made by selecting a group of frequencies using a Random Noise Generator.

"The Random Noise Generator circuit creates a wide spectrum of frequencies simultaneously, creating a hissing sound—'white' noise. Another circuit selectively eliminates certain frequencies; it is a controllable filter. And a third circuit controls the volume of the signal. When an explosion is started, this third circuit allows the frequency to pass through at full volume, and then very quickly decays the amplitude. We can re-start the sound, however, to make a complex explosion."

An explosion for one of the big rocks in *Asteroids* uses lower frequencies, hence the rumbling noise. A spaceship uses higher frequencies. The only software programming involves four choices of explosion frequency circuits, to cover the different size rocks and the spaceships. By comparison, each sound you hear in *Q*bert* is a different software program, and there are about 25 small programs in the game.

weeks or even months to produce. In Turmell's *Turmoil*, a Fox game introduced last November, there is a tune at the end of play which is totally mathematically generated and synthesized. According to Turmell, the music, which lasts 35 seconds, took over *70 hours* of studio time to produce.

Sound is broken down into several categories. First there is real sound which you can hear in your everyday experience, like a car horn or a dog barking. Sometimes, soundtracks will use tapes with real sounds. But more often, the sounds you hear while playing a video game are mathematically generated and measured by frequency. Synthesized sound, created by machines, registers as numbers on a dial in a game designer's studio.

Game designers consider three types of synthesized sound: high frequency, low frequency, and white noise. White noise is created with a random number generator, switching frequencies very fast. It is often used for sounds like explosions or footsteps. Game designers who work on soundtracks soon become versed in frequency numbers and the sounds they represent. "I can pretty much tell what a series of numbers will sound like," says Kitchen.

The sophisticated use of sound in *Q*bert* provides indication of where soundtracks are going. Sound is used to give the characters personality. It is also, in its own way, communicating to players. "Q*bert is not trying to say anything understandable," says a Gottlieb programmer who helped develop the game. "The sound is used to provide clues and enhance effects. It gives you a clue about what's coming up in the game."

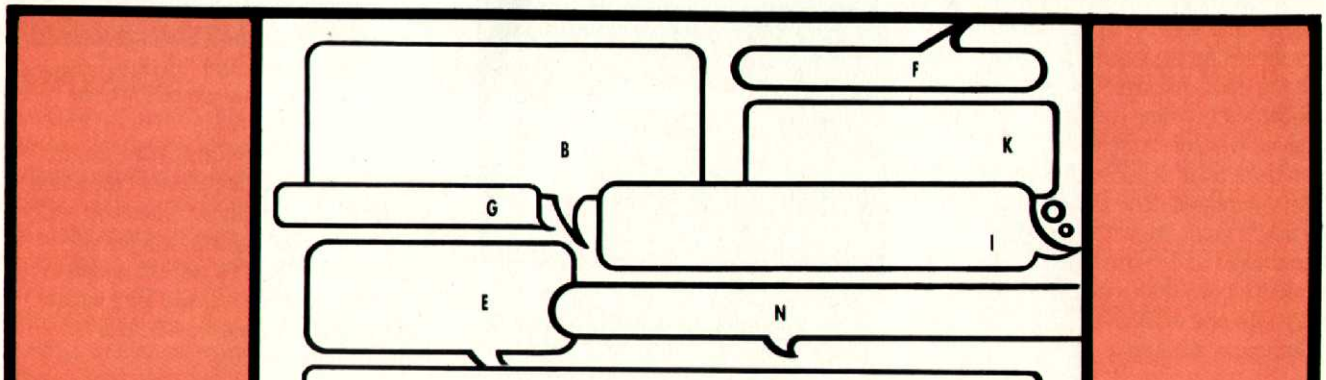
There are limits to sound. While home games can use better quality, arcade games will continue to rely on graphics. As one sound programmer put it, "In a war environment like the arcades, it's hard to hear *anything*." So in an arcade game, explosions are just about the only sound that matters, because they are about the only noises which can rise above the din.

Ed Rotberg, who worked on designing *Asteroids* and *Battlezone*, says the arcade environment doesn't allow for sophisticated sounds like voice synthesis or player-produced music. "Arcade applications have to wait until we have total environment games," he says. Such games would be able to deal with four senses: sight, hearing, touch and smell.

For now, however, the main goal is realism: a car crash in which you *feel* the twisted metal, a rocket that makes the hair on your neck stand up, a bomb explosion that rocks you back from the controls. As the graphics and sounds become more realistic, we care more about winning the game. You have to rescue that *human*, not just some blip on a screen. There is more riding on it. And if you think today's games sound tough, wait until next year!

BETTER SOUND FOR HOME GAMES

Your TV speaker is very small and the sound is of low quality. But you can improve the sound by sending it through the speakers of your stereo. Recoton makes a device that plugs into your TV earphone jack to make your TV sound, video recorder sound, or video game sound come out your stereo speakers. The sound will be "simulated" stereo and you must keep both the TV and stereo on at the same time. Write or call Recoton at: *46-23 Crane St., Long Island City, NY 11101, (212) 392-6442.*



The sounds on the first page were: **A.** The spider in **Centipede**, **B.** A Vader in **Space Invaders**, **C.** The Qix in **Qix**, **D. Turbo** car driving, **E. Asteroids** ship firing, **F.** Fleas dropping in **Centipede**, **G.** THE END in **Missile Command**, **H. Pac-Man**, **I.** Right before you shift in **Gran Prix**, **J. Galaga** bugs dropping bombs, **K.** Coloring of a **Qix** box, **L.** A Fuse burning in **Qix**, **M.** Point count of mushrooms in **Centipede**, **N.** Frog hopping in **Frogger**. Sounds come courtesy of *Defending the Galaxy: The Complete Handbook of Video Gaming*, edited by Michael Rubin. Available for $4.95 at bookstores or from Triad Publishing Company, 1110 NW 8th Ave., Suite C, Gainesville, FL 32601. Add $1 for shipping.

COMPUTER GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Shay Addams and Martin Bass

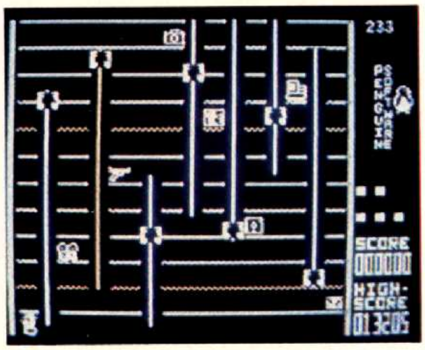
Wiz Plus
©1982
Datamost

WIZPLUS

B

Wizardry and its sequel, *The Knight Of Diamonds*, are two of the most popular fantasy adventures for the Apple. But they take months to play and can get downright frustrating when you lose a favorite character. *Wizplus* is a utility that speeds up the game play. Characters that are dead, paralyzed or poisoned can be restored to prime condition. They can be given weapons and gold. They can even have their experience level and hit points increased. The maps included in the user's guide show the locations of secret doors and magic objects. The result: you can telescope months of *Wizardry* into one weekend.

Datamost, for Apple



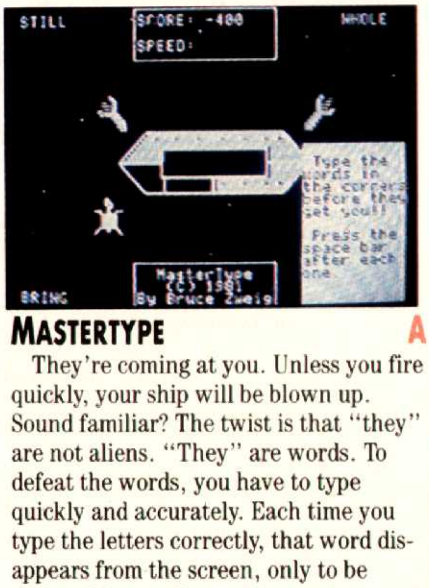
SPY'S DEMISE

B+

Spy's Demise is one of those games you just can't stop playing. The goal is to get your man to the top of a twelve-story building by running horizontally across each floor while avoiding guards in elevators. When you reach the top of the building, you're rewarded with one line of an encoded message. After writing it down, you resume the game, this time starting your climb from the second floor. After each trip to the top, you get another piece of the message.

This is a neat game. Winning requires both coordination (avoiding the guards) and thought (decoding the message). At $19.95, it's a genuine bargain.

Penguin, for Apple.


STILL
SCORE: -400
SPEED:
WHOLE
Type the words in the corners before they get you!!
Press the space bar after each one.
BRING
MasterType
(C) 1981
By Bruce Zweig

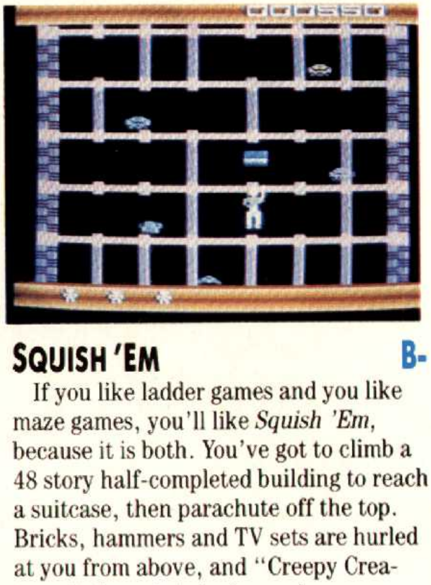
MASTERTYPE

A

They're coming at you. Unless you fire quickly, your ship will be blown up. Sound familiar? The twist is that "they" are not aliens. "They" are words. To defeat the words, you have to type quickly and accurately. Each time you type the letters correctly, that word disappears from the screen, only to be replaced by another one intent on destroying your ship. At the end of a round, the computer gives you a score and tells you your typing speed.

It was a brilliant idea to make typing practice into a video game, so brilliant that Master Type is one of the top ten best-selling programs for the Apple today. You'll have fun. You'll learn something you want to learn. What better combination can you ask for?

Lightning Software, for Apple. Also for Atari 800



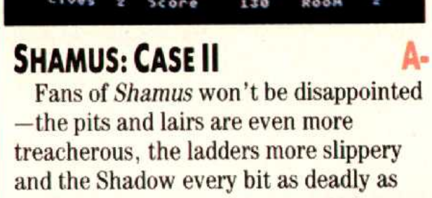
SQUISH 'EM

B-

If you like ladder games and you like maze games, you'll like *Squish 'Em,* because it is both. You've got to climb a 48 story half-completed building to reach a suitcase, then parachute off the top. Bricks, hammers and TV sets are hurled at you from above, and "Creepy Creatures" abound, to be jumped over or stomped.

It's a very easy to learn, cute, addicting, and good-looking arcade-type game, similar to *Crazy Climber.* Once you really learn to slide and squish, it feels like dancing. But don't expect this game to keep you occupied over the long winter.

Sirius, for Commodore 64. Also for Atari 400/800 and VIC



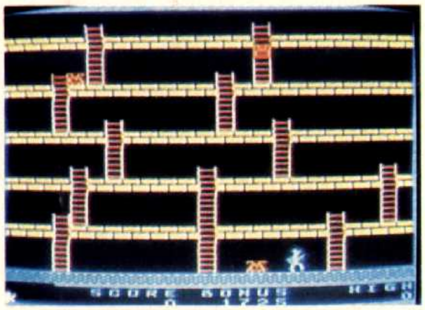
SHAMUS: CASE II

A-

Fans of *Shamus* won't be disappointed —the pits and lairs are even more treacherous, the ladders more slippery and the Shadow every bit as deadly as you fight your way to the top of his murderous underwater fortress. Mutant mollusks, fiendish fish and the Slavering Snakes make excellent targets for your plasmar detonators, and inventive sound effects enhance the sharp graphics and colors.

But the thing that makes this such a winner is the finely-tuned blend of shoot-'em-up and adventure, as you must explore every side corridor, pit and chamber for extra lives and the ultimate passage to the Shadow's lair. One improvement over the original is a pause feature that displays a map of your progress. If it's fast-paced, high-caliber action/adventure you're after, this is the one.

Synapse, for Atari 400/800 with 32K



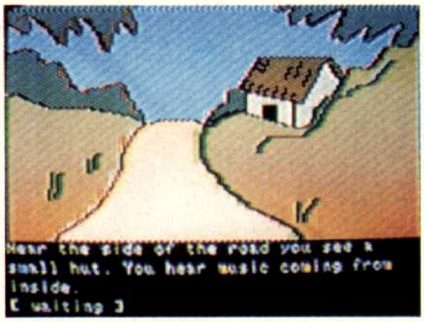
APPLE PANIC

B

At first, I nailed this one as a real loser. "You must destroy wandering apple monsters by digging holes in the brick floors for them to fall into, then bashing them through the holes with a pick-axe." *Boring!* Seven hundred and nineteen bashed apples later, it was no longer a panic—it was an obsession.

It's a ladder game, one of the first, and the screens vary enough to keep the play unpredictable and interesting. Current and high scores are posted throughout, but you don't get any replacements for your original pick-axers no matter how high your score. Too bad. So what's so addictive? *Apple Panic* is a well-programmed combination of action and strategy, infinitely more challenging than *Donkey Kong*. Though the game (as *Space Panic*) bombed in the arcades, it blasted to the top as a computer game for the Apple. The VIC version is a winner, too. A pause feature is included in the game. Especially good game if you enjoy beating monsters over the head. Coleco has a version of the game for ColecoVision—*Space Panic*.

Creative Software, for VIC-20



```
Near the side of the road you see a
small hut. You hear music coming from
inside.
[ waiting ]
```

MASK OF THE SUN

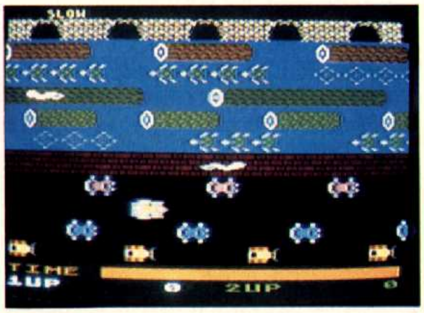
A-

Adventure games have always been popular on the Apple. In the beginning, the games were text only. Then pictures were added. Lately, there's been a trend toward making the graphics more sophisticated. It's in this area—state of the art graphics—that the *Mask of the Sun* stands out.

What the authors have done is to pack many, many pictures on the disk. The pictures are displayed fast enough to give the illusion of animation. Sound effects have also been added—quite a rarity in adventure games. The game will understand complete English sentences as well as truncated ones. So you can type "Get into the jeep" or simply "into jeep."

If you want to see the most sophisticated graphics to date in an adventure, *Mask of the Sun* is your game.

Ultrasoft, for Apple



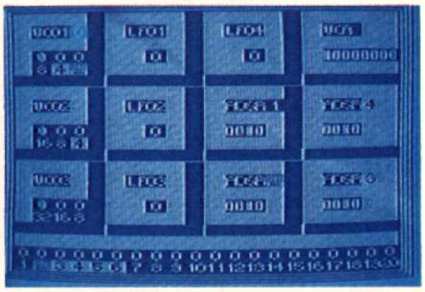
FROGGER

B

This may be the first home game that surpasses the arcade original. In addition to well-defined frogs, logs, snakes and crocodiles, you are serenaded with jaunty music as you play—*Yankee Doodle, Old MacDonald,* etc. The game can be played with the joystick or keyboard and you can pause it or cut out the music if you'd like.

Basically it's an excellent adaptation of *Frogger,* which we know and love. The only question is, with so many great games coming out, do we still care about getting this old frog to the other side of the road?

Sierra On-Line, for Commodore 64



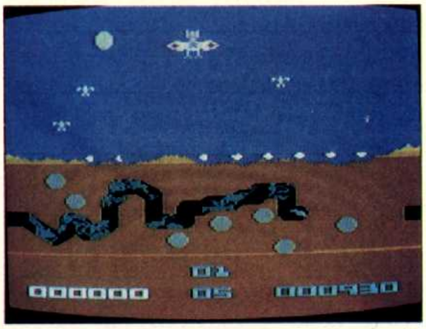
SYNTHESOUND

B+

Synthesound transforms your VIC into a synthesizer that takes advantage of the computer's music capabilities. The keys on the computer are used like piano keys, and the screen displays a piano keyboard to help you get oriented. Once you've got the feel of "tickling the terminal" instead of the ivories, you can customize your tones—bagpipes, trombones, even sci-fi sounds can be generated with no programming know-how.

The only drawback is that you can't compose a tune and SAVE it to replay later. But you *do* learn about envelopes, attack and decay rates, sustain and other elements of computerized music. *Synthesound* is an excellent tool for budding Beethovens and rock 'n' ROM musicians. It might even be put to serious work in the studio or onstage, though its main value is educational.

HES for VIC-20

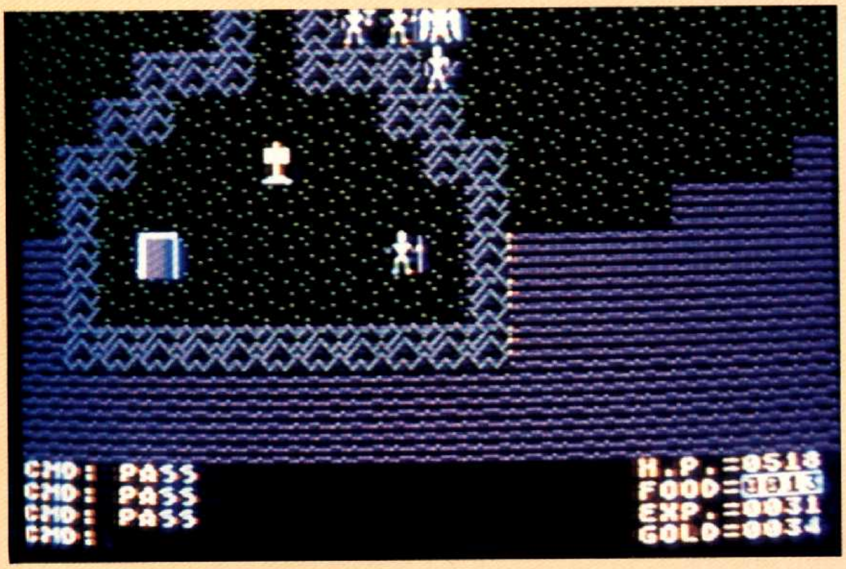


BOULDERS AND BOMBS

B

How did the astronaut get to the other side of the planet? He tunnels beneath the surface with a high-speed drill. But it's more than a horizontal *Dig Dug:* you've got a wacko-looking Alien Bird

GAME OF THE MONTH



```
CMD: PASS
CMD: PASS
CMD: PASS
CMD:
```

```
H.P.=0518
FOOD=0313
EXP.=0031
GOLD=0034
```

ULTIMA II A+

Adventurers, grab your swords! Mondain, the villain of the original *Ultima*, is dead, but his evil protege Minax lives. Your character can be human, dwarf, elf or hobbit and a Fighter, Thief, Cleric or Wizard. His (or her) status can be displayed anytime, a game in progress can be easily SAVEd, and hit points, experience and gold are constantly onscreen.

The most inventive element of *Ultima II* is its "time doors," which enable you to travel to any of five eras—from the misty prehistoric to the far future—as well as to different continents and islands. After time-traveling, you can board a horse, ship or plane to move around the terrain faster. A rocket will even take you across the galaxy (via a second disk). Richly colored maps scroll all four ways; when you enter a town, its streets and buildings fill the screen. Playability is top-notch.

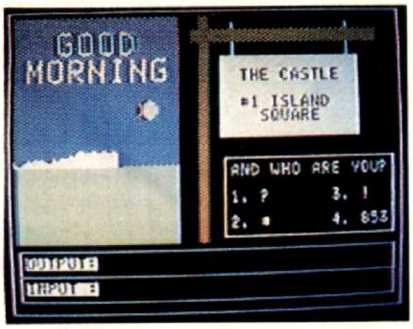
The programmers neglected sound, nearly nonexistent, and used the freed-up memory to make room for more lands, towns and dungeons. All told, *Ultima II* is an original, well-designed and executed adventure that offers many hours—more likely weeks and months!—of high-caliber entertainment.

Sierra On-Line, for Apple and Atari 400/800 with 48K

flying overhead dropping "Probe Birds," whose fungus-injecting probes shoot through the subsurface. If they don't hit you, they'll block your progess. So will "nuclear rods" raining from the sky.

Scoring is based on how long you take to cross to the escape tunnel on the far side. There are 99 screens. Richly colored graphics and detailed animation enhance the action. The alien sun actually travels across the sky, and when it sets, a moon orbits throughout the night. Best thing about this one-of-a-kind game is that it accepts four joysticks, allowing your friends to control the alien Probe Birds!

CBS, for Atari 400/800



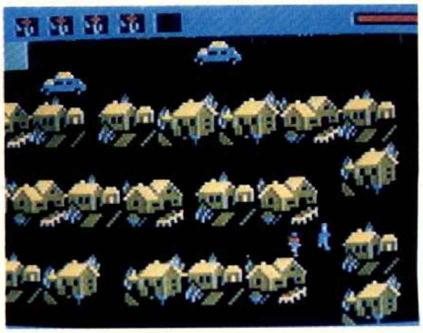
```
GOOD
MORNING

THE CASTLE
#1 ISLAND
SQUARE

AND WHO ARE YOU?
1. ?        3. !
2. ■        4. 653

OUTPUT:
INPUT:
```

PRISONER 2 B+

Prisoner 2 is a subtle, difficult puzzle in which you have several goals: getting off the island where you're imprisoned; keeping secret a piece of information the guards are trying to extract from you; and above all maintaining your individuality in the face of psychological torture.

To heighten the pressure, the computer plays tricks on you. For example, keys don't work the way they should. You might type "*N*" only to see "T" appear on the screen. You'll be offered a clue, only to find it was the same clue you got last time. The computer will frustrate you in every way it can, even, at one point, threatening to erase the disk if you stop playing. If you think you're strong willed, if you think you are really tough, test yourself against *Prisoner 2*.

Edu-Ware, for Apple

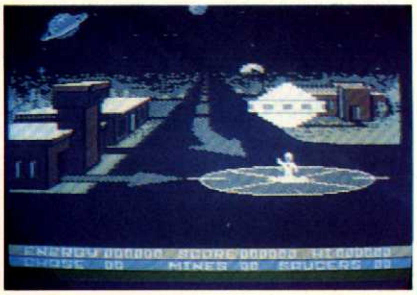


E.T. PHONE HOME B

Don't get confused with the VCS *E.T.* game. There are similarities in concept, but the design is sharper and execution more complex. The screen scrolls in four directions as E.T. searches for the phone pieces he needs to call home. (Why he didn't just go to Radio Shack beats the heck out of us!)

The suburban neighborhood, with its gingerbread houses and nearby forests are intricately portrayed, and the sounds really make *E.T.* fun to play. After you've collected all the pieces, E.T. actually speaks! (no voice attachment necessary) then you scram out to the forest, hoping to reach the mother ship's landing site before you run out of energy. If you make it, the saucer beams E.T. aboard in one of the most entertaining climaxes around. Nine difficulty levels should give you plenty of extraterrestrial pleasure and challenge. E.T.'s energy is indicated by a red line and four flowers. You can earn more flowers, and the game is over when you lose them all. For kids *and* adults.

Atari, for Atari 400/800


ENERGY 000000 SCORE 000000 HI 000000
CHASE 00 MINES 00 SAUCERS 00

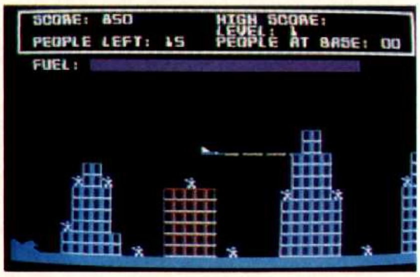
ASTRO CHASE

A

The Megardians have surrounded the galaxy with a force field. They've put their most potent weapons—the Mega Mines—into orbit around Earth. Sixteen of them are slowly closing in, each packed with enough explosives to blast the plant to bits. Your mission: Save Earth by vaporizing the mines. That's not easy, because you're constantly distracted by squadrons of fighters, which track you down and nail you with their lasers.

You have to get used to your ship's unique maneuvering mechanism. Any time you touch the fire button, you go into auto-pilot. The ship continues in a straight line and lasers are fired by joystick movement like in *Robotron*. You can position yourself between two planets and bounce back and forth, turning your ship into a giant machine gun. All this takes place against a scrolling backdrop of rich blues and whites. These graphics and the extraordinary animated intermissions make *Astro Chase* a standout.

First Star, for Atari 800



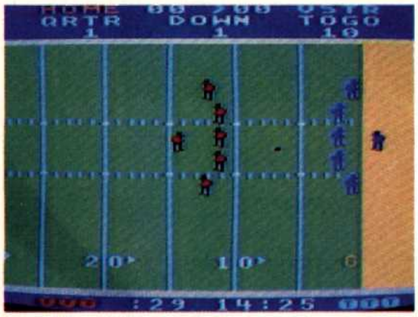
PROTECTOR II

B

Like *Defender?* Crazy about *Choplifter?* You'll go bonkers over this. You've got to rescue 18 refugees in New Hope, all waving their hands as you fly over. Pick 'em up one at a time and deliver them to the far side of an intermittently erupting volcano.

If you're not fast enough, an alien mother ship (why don't these games ever have *father* ships?) snatches the refugees and drops them into the volcano. There are also enemy meteroids, chompers, lasers and other nasty weapons. Rescue all 18 refugees and the volcano erupts, devastating New Hope with lava. It's also fun to shoot all the refugees or drop them in the volcano yourself.

Synapse, for Atari 400/800 with 32K



STARBOWL FOOTBALL

B

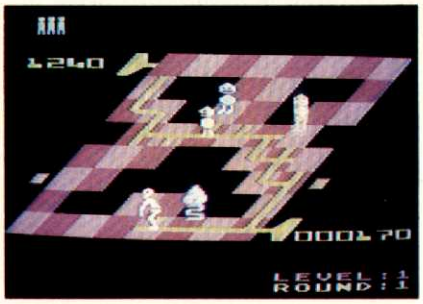
Cheerleaders are the only thing missing in this otherwise authentic sports simulation. A one/two-player game offering "college" or "pro" skill levels, *Starbowl* scrolls horizontally in both directions to avoid cramping the entire field onto one screen. Both teams are represented by well-animated characters, the crowd roars, and there's also a musical half-time show.

When you've got the ball, you coach by selecting (with joystick) the pass patterns and blocking assignments. Or an eligible receiver can be picked, in which case you directly control the passing. Defense is programmed the same way, and you can control the free safety's action. Nearly 200 offense/defense options are available. Punts, field goals, interceptions—everything that happens in the Superbowl is possible in *Starbowl*.

Play lasts an hour, and the teams switch goalposts for each quarter. Yards-for-first-down, time remaining, and score are constantly displayed on an overhead scoreboard.

Starbowl's only snag is its tricky method of passing and receiving. Unclear instructions can make mastering this task quite frustrating. The more you already know about the various patterns and plays, the more fun you'll get out of it—but even novices can learn a lot from *Starbowl*.

Gamestar, for Atari 400/800



JUICE

B+

Edison, your main man here, hops around a pink, slanted checkerboard-like affair, completing circuit boards with his tracks to score. But he's got to avoid creeps like Killerwatt and Nohm, who bounce along behind to zap him.

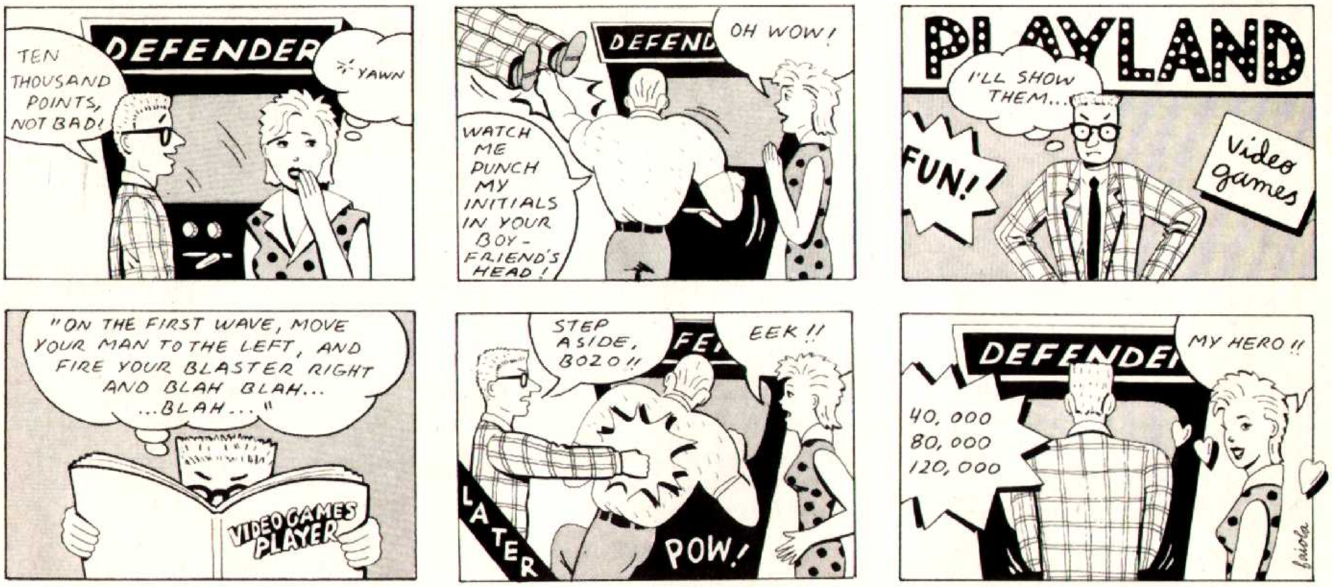
This is made somewhat easier by two squares on opposite sides of the board. Hopping onto one of them immediately "teleports" you to the other. Killerwatt can often be duped by maneuvering back and forth in this manner. However, unlike the other nasties, he can also follow you onto the teleportation squares and deliver a real double-whammy to Edison.

You can start play at any of six levels, each of which has three rounds. The board's structure differs with each round, and higher levels require fancier footwork to complete the circuit. An extra Edison is awarded for every 10,000 points (you begin with five). Scoring is unique: you get bonuses for avoiding Killerwatt and touching base with Recharge and Flash. Sound effects are adequate, and the animation is crisp and lively. Covering the board demands as much strategy as reflexes, and results in a game with value-packed longevity. Excellent game for *Q*Bert* fans.

Tronix, for Atari 400/800

And why didn't any of the computer games reviewed this month get Ds or Fs, you ask? Simple: the ones that would have scored miserably were so bad, we buried them in a toxic waste dump in East Noxious, New Jersey, before the art department got a chance to photograph the screens. But the ones that survived are the best "boots" money can buy this month.

"I was a 97 lb. video wimp… Until I subscribed to Video Games Player!"


DEFENDER
TEN THOUSAND POINTS, NOT BAD!
YAWN
DEFEND
OH WOW!
WATCH ME PUNCH MY INITIALS IN YOUR BOY-FRIEND'S HEAD!
PLAYLAND
I'LL SHOW THEM...
FUN!
Video games
"ON THE FIRST WAVE, MOVE YOUR MAN TO THE LEFT, AND FIRE YOUR BLASTER RIGHT AND BLAH BLAH... ...BLAH..."
VIDEO GAMES PLAYER
STEP ASIDE, BOZO!!
FE
EEK!!
LATER
POW!
DEFENDE
MY HERO!!
40,000
80,000
120,000

Once I was so ashamed of my pathetic scores that I dreaded being seen in an arcade. I was so bad that the voice-synthesized coin-op games would say to me, "Stay away…you're wasting your money." Then I discovered the secret that changed me from a 97 lb. wimp to the awesome video jock I am today. The secret—a subscription to *Video Games Player* magazine. Before I knew it, I could roll every game in the arcade. Now everyone crowds around to watch my technique, but nobody dares put a quarter on the machine—they may have to wait all night!

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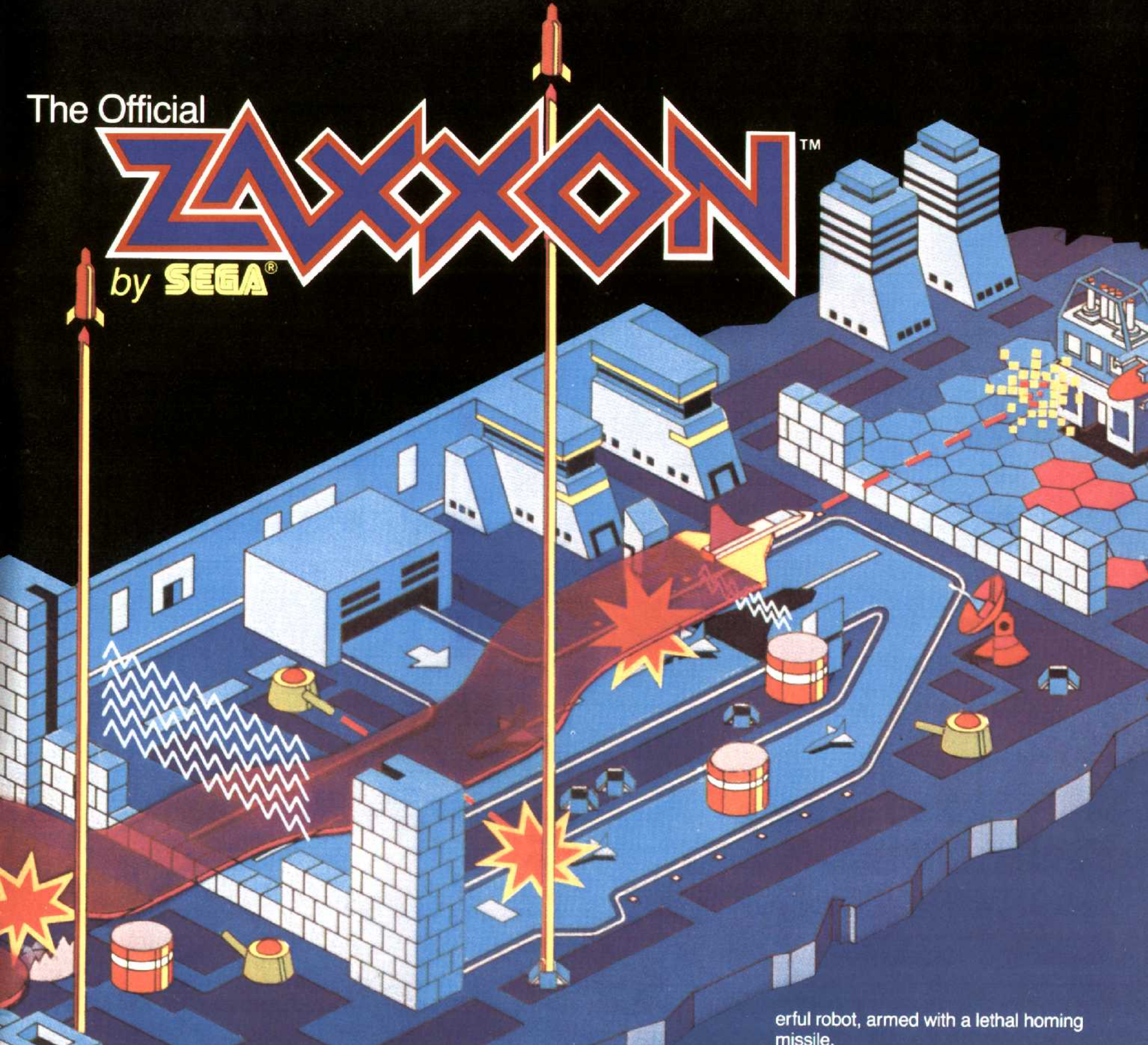

The game that puts space games in perspective. Zaxxon™, one of the most popular arcade games of 1982, is now available for use with your home computer system.

Zaxxon™ technology and creativity present a 3-dimensional-like playfield which sets Zaxxon™ apart from other computer games.

Zaxxon™ looks and sounds like aircraft flight, and players can soar to new levels of home computer entertainment. From the daring attack on the enemy's floating fortress and the blazing battle against the enemy's fighter fleet to the final showdown with the deadly armored robot, Zaxxon™ challenges the skill and imagination of every player at every level of skill.

Imagine yourself the pilot, attacking the enemy fortress–climbing, diving, strafing to score points and extra fuel. The enemy fights back with a barrage of missiles and gunfire. Then you face a fleet of enemy fighters in a gripping dogfight of altitude strategy and flying skill. Survive this battle and the enemy's fortress, defended with laser barriers, then you've earned the ultimate challenge; a blazing confrontation with the powerful robot, armed with a lethal homing missile.

Zaxxon™ is the one game that you must see to believe. You have to play it to feel its impact. If you're ready to face the challenge, check with your local software dealer or send check or money order with \$2.00 postage/handling. California residents add 6½% sales tax. Available on cassette or diskette. Suggested retail price \$39.95.

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6
9
#
START
PAUSE
RESET
4
7
*
Moving in circles can turn your scores around.

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